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START II Seen as 'Catastrophe for Russia'

PM0903155593 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 4 Mar 93 p 7

[Interview with Captain First Rank of the Reserve Anatoliy Gorbachev by Andrey Vasilyev under the rubric "To Disarm, but Sensibly"; place and date not given: "From the Nuclear Abyss to Catastrophe for Russia—That Is Where the START II Treaty Is Leading, Captain First Rank of the Reserve Anatoliy Gorbachev Believes"—first two paragraphs are introduction]

[Text] In the mid-1980's, A.N. Gorbachev, commander of a guided-missile strategic patrol submarine [raketnyy podvodnyy kreyser strategicheskogo naznacheniya], carried out an independent analysis of the state of the USSR Navy and brought the inauspicious results to the KGB. "At one time I refused to be your undercover agent, but today I cannot remain silent," he said to the fearsome department. "If my conclusions are correct, let them be taken to the top, and if this is all slander, then take me to court."

For a year specialists studied the results of his labor, then acknowledged them to be objective and forwarded them to V. Chebrikov. Through him, the information on the state of the navy was passed on to M. Gorbachev. In 1990 a plan for the modernization [rekonstruktsiya] of the navy was announced to B. Yeltsin. But A. Gorbachev's conclusions did not produce any effect.

[Vasilyev] Well, as a former "hawk," as you are now generally called, it is appropriate for you to be opposed to the reduction of nuclear weapons, isn't it?

[Gorbachev] Well, that is not quite how it is. In order to understand the full danger of the nuclear race you would probably have to become commander of a nuclear submarine carrying 16 ballistic nuclear missiles comparable to thousands of the American bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But it is precisely my knowledge that enables me to state authoritatively today: Unilateral disarmament makes the world a more dangerous place.

[Vasilyev] If you do not deny the need for nuclear disarmament, then how do you see this process?

[Gorbachev] I see it as a phased process. A responsible and honest process, neither to the detriment nor to the advantage of any individual country. It would be most advisable to travel any farther down this path under the auspices of the United Nations—in particular, to form an independent commission of experts, as well as an international court, which would rule out the possibility of infringing the rights of or giving priority to specific nuclear powers, as well as the unscrupulousness of politicians.

[Vasilyev] Where do you see the danger in disarmament on the basis of START II?

[Gorbachev] The latest treaty gives most of the residual nuclear potential (1,750 warheads out of 3,000-3,500) to the navies. In this way, the navies get the main responsibility for the national security of their countries. Is the Russian Navy capable of justifying these hopes? No. We are familiar with the opinion of professionals who believe that the airborne and land-based strategic potentials will be six to seven times smaller than the American potential. The U.S. Navy is 12 times stronger than the Russian Navy, while in terms of submarines the ratio is 1:8, of surface ships—1:10, and of naval aviation—1:18.

Given that our missile-armed submarines are under particularly intense surveillance by NATO antisubmarine warfare [ASW] forces and systems, the capacity of the Russian nuclear missile submarine systems for implementing their strategic potential is a whole order of magnitude lower than it is for those of the United States.

[Vasilyev] What you are saying is at variance with the viewpoint of high-ranking military figures, who have always maintained that we have the best navy... What, in your opinion, lies behind such a striking lag?

[Gorbachev] First and foremost, the noise generated by the majority of our submarines is between six and 50 times greater than the noise level of American submarines. This indicator alone reduces the combat effectiveness of our nuclear submarines to zero. Ask any specialist and he will answer: "A submarine with such a noise level is a target." For a number of years I worked on a commission under the Main Command of the USSR Navy. We analyzed the status of Soviet submarines' undetectability. I can testify that between 1967 and 1983 all our strategic missile-armed submarines were detected one way or another and could have been destroyed even before they had launched their first missile, and without having any idea of the loss of their own undetectability.

Unsatisfactory acoustics, an extremely outdated level of electronic warfare systems, poor protection against low-flying missiles and particularly against the ASW weaponry of NATO submarines have simply made a laughingstock of our submarines. This too is no secret to those in power.

I will cite only one example concerning naval aviation: The total search capability of a Soviet ASW airplane is inferior to the corresponding U.S. airplane by a factor of 200-plus.

[Vasilyev] You can convince me. But how can the Russian leadership be convinced that a mistake has been made and that it needs to be corrected? How can it be proved that what we have here is a manifest strengthening of the United States? And to my mind this is dangerous for the whole world.

[Gorbachev] Only by means of the facts. They are known to the Russian leadership and to top military officials. But here are some new facts for the Russian people:

1. The United States and NATO as a whole have a highly efficient hydroacoustic early warning system for

detecting our missile-armed submarines throughout the world's oceans. We do not have such a system, and we cannot have one primarily because of Russia's military-geographic conditions. And this means that we simply have nothing with which to detect U.S. submarines. Need it be said that merely the conventional missile weaponry of these submarines is sufficient to punish Russia without response in the same way Iraq was punished?

2. The United States and its NATO allies have an ultra-long-range early warning radar for detecting launches of our ballistic missiles. This system encircles Russia from Norway and Britain in the west to Alaska and Japan in the east. We do not have such a system. In light of the collapse of the USSR and the Warsaw Pact, we will not have one in the future either.

3. Without being in the least embarrassed, the United States is continuing to develop the SDI system. There is no doubt that within 10-15 years this system will be extremely effective against Russia's remaining nuclear potential. And we do not have such an antimissile system. And judging by the way our military-industrial complex is being destroyed to please the United States, there will not be one at all. SDI alone will reduce our remaining strategic potential to zero.

4. The considerable strategic nuclear potential of Britain and France may only hypothetically be separated from the corresponding U.S. potential. Does Russia have such a reserve of strategic nuclear potential? No. Judging by the way the United States and its allies are putting pressure on Ukraine and Kazakhstan, there is no way you can speak of the parity of the United States and Russia.

5. U.S. nuclear submarines alone account for many hundreds of high-precision nuclear-armed Tomahawk-type cruise missiles with a range of fire of up to 3,000 km. Of course this is a very real strategic weapon, particularly inasmuch as its low-noise delivery vehicles are practically invulnerable to our navy.

Incidentally, merely on U.S. submarines there are enough such "tactical" missiles to destroy all the main installations and cities on Russia's territory and take it out of a war. Does it need to be said that, in event of such completely possible conditions, U.S. territory will again escape the impact of a single bomb or a single missile. It is pertinent to say that even the conventional components of such missiles (there are over 3,000 Tomahawks among the weaponry of U.S. submarines and airplanes) may bring Russia to the brink of defeat.

Someone will rightly object that we have such missiles in our arsenal, too. Yes, such missiles have appeared in our arsenal, and again as a result of our chasing the United States. But in order for our excessively noisy nuclear-powered vessels to reach their launch stations, thousands of miles will have to be covered within the range of U.S. deep-sea hydrophones, with virtually a zero chance of success. So that in this case, too, there is a clear increase in the unilateral advantage of the United States.

[Vasilyev] The two latest treaties between the USSR and the United States and the United States and Russia decrease the quantitative aspect of the strategic potentials from 15,000-16,000 warheads to 3,000-3,500. A five-fold reduction! You will agree that this is a different, lower level of nuclear threat to mankind....

[Gorbachev] Let us start with the fact that no less than 3,000 of the U.S. warheads which are indisputably strategic will be guaranteed to reach their targets on our territory. At the same time, given all the facts we have cited, Russia cannot count on more than 300-350 nuclear weapons. A 10-fold advantage for the United States! Russia's 300-350 more or less real strategic nuclear weapons are even fewer than what Britain and France have separately in their arsenals, never mind China's strategic potential.

Yes, a significant proportion of the United States' so-called tactical nuclear weapons are, nevertheless, essentially strategic. Plus the fact that by and large the strategic potential of the U.S. allies is on one and the same side. Consequently, there is no question of any comparable reduction in strength.

Something else is also clear to everyone who reads the treaty attentively, and particularly to a professional: The United States is mainly reducing only what has clearly become obsolete. Nuclear missile systems and complexes are already being replaced or will be replaced by less vulnerable ones. And to a significant extent (if not fully) this restores the present strategic potential. Without any treaties at all the United States would cut the obsolete, worn-out missile submarines of the 1960's and 1970's and replace them with the more durable Trident-2 nuclear missile submarine system.

Who can fail to realize that the future of U.S. strategic aviation lies with the high-speed, ultra-long-range bomber which is invisible to radar and is worth any number of the obsolete airplanes?

If you read the 3 January 1993 treaty attentively, and consult the military who have served alongside the country's nuclear potential, then you will realize that it meets the national security needs of anyone but Russia. Only a gullible person could hope that with the nuclear games being played into one goal [pri yadernykh igrakh v odni vorota] the world will become a safer place than it used to be. Let us be totally honest: It was the USSR which restrained the United States from geopolitical aggression, and it was never the military monster or the empire of evil that the now triumphant U.S. imperialism actually was and still is. For example: Of the 12 basic forms of modern weaponry during the period 1940-1980 10 were created for the first time by the United States. Does this not show graphically who is the guilty party?!

[Vasilyev] Does this mean that you believe that, in order to maintain the parity of the former USSR, Ukraine and Kazakhstan must remain nuclear powers?

[Gorbachev] That is correct. Not just to maintain the world nuclear equilibrium, but also in order to promote the more accelerated nuclear disarmament of the whole world community. If these states maintain their nuclear potentials, this does not mean proliferation of nuclear weapons at all, it means maintenance of the status quo in the world's military-political equilibrium. In a word, the future world bandit is getting stronger in every respect, knocking Russia off its feet and treading it as yet invisibly into the dirt. But what will things be like then, when a real monster will acquire the full freedom to punish the whole world?

[Vasilyev] How do you see strategic nuclear cooperation among Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan in the period before the total nuclear disarmament of the world community?

[Gorbachev] Common sense dictates unified nuclear planning, production, and management with mutual responsibility at just as high a level as the Western allies have among themselves. No one has the right to deprive Ukraine and Kazakhstan of their state dignity, though, or to conduct talks on nuclear disarmament behind their backs. Tell me, would Britain and France allow the United States to conduct talks on the reduction of their national nuclear arsenals? Never.

[Vasilyev] Has the time not come to make an assessment of START II not just in the Russian Supreme Soviet but also in the Constitutional Court?

[Gorbachev] It is high time. But on condition that the Contitutional Court will serve only the Constitution and no one else. While Russia's Supreme Soviet must adopt a responsible approach to the country's national security and prevent it being brought down to a level whereby the United States will start punishing us like they did Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, Libya, Lebanon, and Iraq.

Azerbaijani, Armenian Envoys to Iran Interviewed

NC0603124993 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 25 Feb 93 pp 3, 6

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] In order to review the political situation in the Republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia, their relations with Russia and Turkey, and the situation in Karabakh, we met separately with the ambassador of Azerbaijan and the charge d'affaires of Armenia in Tehran. We first asked Azerbaijan's Ambassador Nasib Logman Ogly Nasibzade to discuss the developments that have taken place in Baku's political-military structure. He said: I am not as aware of the situation as you are, we have problems contacting Baku. He did not deny that the war has become a complicated matter for the Republic of Azerbaijan. Nasibzade said that recent incidents, in which Azerbaijani forces retreated, evacuating seven villages, are a big problem and that the recent changes stem from this incident. Mr. Nasibzade said: The resignation of the defense minister is definitely related to the war. That is, our defense minister committed many mistakes and had to resign.

We asked the Azerbaijani ambassador if he believes the retreats in the war were solely the fault of the defense minister's policies.

He said: In my opinion the main reason for these incidents was the defense minister. [passage omitted]

Nasibzade denied any knowledge of the recent formation of a new political oppositon front in Baku. He said there may be opposition groups and parties, but not a front.

On relations with Turkey, Nasibzade said: Of course relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey should be very close. The two countries have similar languages, cultures, and histories. In my opinion, the Iranians are very sensitive on this matter and think that Azerbaijan's friendship with Turkey is to Iran's detriment. On the contrary, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Iran are fraternal and neighoring Muslim countries and I think that the Republic of Azerbaijan can have close relations with both Iran and Turkey. We are now opening the doors of our country to the world and initially we want to establish relations with neighboring countries. We even want to have relations with the Republic of Armenia too.

We asked the ambassador if Turkey is extending military assistance to Azerbaijan. No, he answered, Ankara has not extended military assistance to us. Turkey has extended only political and economic assistance.

We asked him about reports about Turkish aid to Armenia. Nasibzade said: It is good and logical for Turkey to want to have relations with Yerevan. But it is a source of concern for us because we are at war with that country.

Nasibzade refuted reports that Turkey disagrees with the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Karabakh conflict, saying Turkey has repeatedly stated that Karabakh is belongs to Azerbaijan. [passage omitted]

The ambassador also referred to reports on Russia's military assistance to Armenia, saying: Russia's Seventh Army is stationed in Armenia and recently the Russians deployed the army that they withdrew from Eastern Europe to Armenia. He said the Russians have always used support for Armenia as a trump card, adding that Armenia is a base for Russia as well as for Europe and the West. We asked the ambassador why Iran's mediation efforts in Karabakh were thwarted. He said: The Armenians did not respect their commitment and, within one day of the talks, they occupied Shusha. The Russians, too, were concerned over Iran's mediation efforts and acted as a serious obstacle. [passage omitted]

Nasibzade also said the people of Azerbaijan are extremely sensitive on the issue of assistance to Armenia by other countries. What Turkey has done, by granting permission to trucks carrying wheat to use its territory for transit to Yerevan, has caused concern among the people of Azerbaijan. He said rumors of Iranian assistance to Armenia caused concern among the people, and asked: Why do Iran and other countries help Bosnia—which, of course they should—but do not help Azerbaijan?! Are our youths not killed in the war? Are our youths not Muslims? He said that there are groups and individuals in the Republic of Azerbaijan that are spreading propaganda on Iran.

He said: Iran should not be worried about Turkey's influence as we in Azerbaijan should not be worried about Iran's influence. We should fear the infiltration and return of Russia to the Republic of Azerbaijan. We asked the ambassador of Azerbaijan why his government has recognized Israel. Confirming that this was true, he said: We do not have diplomatic relations with Israel. He added that he is aware of the talks and negotiations that are said to have taken place between Tel Aviv and Baku. [passage omitted] He said he is ready for the war to end in Azerbaijan's favor even if this means the establishment of relations with Israel and receiving assistance from that country.

We asked him if he thought relations with Israel would harm relations with Islamic countries. We reminded him that Iran has extended assistance to Baku in the form of oil and gas and various other products. But Nasibzade said: We have been waiting four or five years for assistance which has not come! We do not have any problems as far as holding talks and establishing relations and contacts with Israel are concerned! We have a Jewish minority in Azerbaijan which is now emigrating to Israel. [passage omitted]

Armenian Charge d'Affaires Vahan Bayburdyan asked us to fax him the topics that would be covered our the interview, but when our correspondent arrived at his residence, he was handed a written text that the charge had prepared. Thus, we were unable to hold a direct interview and to ask questions about the critical situation in Armenia. The text of the Armenian charge's answers to our questions are exactly as follows:

[RESALAT] How are Turkey's relations with the Republic of Armenia? How much assistance has been received from the United States and France?

[Bayburdyan] One of the most important points of Armenian foreign policy is its relations with all countries. It is obvious that the security of the government and the nation is contingent on the establishment of good relations with all neighboring countries, on the solution of problems through peaceful negotiations, and on progress in economic cooperation on the world level.

So far diplomatic relations have not been established between Armenia and Turkey. Therefore, the issue is one of regulating relations with Turkey and this process has not yet concluded. As far as the assistance sent by the United States and France is concerned, I would like to point out that Armenia's economic situation is such that the people of Armenia will be grateful for humanitarian assistance from all countries.

[RESALAT] What is your view on the solution to the Karabakh problem? Do you consider Karabakh to be a part of Azerbaijani territory or not? What form of autonomy should there be?

[Bayburdyan] You are well aware that in the world today nations have the right to self-determination. Therefore, the people of Nagorno-Karabakh should not be considered as an ethnic minority, depriving them of their right to self-determination. One should not allow people to be forced to leave their ancestral lands under the mask of territorial integrity. Azerbaijan does not give any guarantees that the rights of the residents of Karabakh will be respected. [passage omitted] Under such conditions, defensive struggles are the only guarantee for the security of the people in Karabakh. [passage omitted]

Therefore, first and foremost, in order to solve the Karabakh problem the security of the residents of Karabakh should be ensured and then an agreement reached on a cease-fire. Only after this can all legal matters be solved through talks. [passage omitted]

[RESALAT] What is the extent of Russia's relations with the Republic of Armenia?

[Bayburdyan] Traditionally Armenia has friendly relations with Russia. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] was formed, of which both the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia are members. Many pacts and agreements have been signed and implemented by the two countries and there are economic and commercial relations between the two.

As far as your question on whether Russia is helping both warring sides or not, I should say that Russia's stance on the Karabahk issue is extremely impartial.

[RESALAT] How is Armenia's current economic, social, and political situation and what was the reason for dismissal of the labor minister?

[Bayburdyan] Armenia is now facing a siege and an economic crisis. [passage omitted]

As for the foreign minister's [as published] resignation, reports on this have been published in the Armenian and foreign press. Generally speaking, in all countries of the world prime ministers are changed and their cabinets are reshuffled; Armenia is not an exception to this rule! [Signed] Vahan Bayburdyan, charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia.

Iran, Azerbaijan, Ukraine Sign Gas Pipeline Agreement

LD0903231493 Moscow ECONOMIC NEWS AGENCY in Russian 1700 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] The governments of Iran, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan have reached agreement on the construction of a gas pipeline to convey gas to Ukraine from Iran through Azerbaijan and Russia. For this purpose a joint enterprise is being set up in which Iran and Ukraine will each have 45 percent of the shares and Azerbaijan 10 percent.

Iranian-Ukrainian accords also envision an annual delivery of Iranian oil amounting to 4 million tonnes a year. Settlement for the energy resources will be effected both by barter operations and in foreign currency.

Iran's Quest for Influence in Central Asia Viewed

PM1003100193 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 3 Mar 93 p 3

[Article by Candidate of Historical Sciences Vyacheslav Ushakov: "Iran's Islamic Card—Will It Be Played in Central Asia?"]

[Text] The dramatic events of the late eighties and early nineties—the end of the Cold War, the breakup of the USSR, the defeat of communism, the triumph of pro-Western democracies in Eastern Europe, and the war in the Persian Gulf—could with full justification include the extraordinary phenomenon sweeping the Near East and Central Asia: a second wave of Islam. As after the Islamic revolution of 1979, Iran is the detonator.

Tehran ideologues, primarily the country's leader, Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, stress that the "triumphant march of Islam across the world" has begun and that Muslims must "play a dominant role in world development." The policy of exporting the Iranian revolution to other countries, including the new Central Asian states, is being revived on these grounds. The Iranian leadership is dispatching thousands of Muslim preachers and mullahs to propagandize "all-conquering" Islam, and Tehran is giving active financial assistance with building mosques abroad, training officiants, and distributing the Koran and other religious literature.

The Central Asian republics are now the target of radio propaganda—mainly religious in content—from Tehran, Qom, and Mashhad, which, as a rule, is conducted in the local languages and dialects. Iran is closely following

events in the Central Asian republics, urging their leaders and, more particularly, their people to follow the Islamic path of development and presenting itself as a model and an example of true progress. The Iranian leadership has quite serious hopes that this transformation will take place in the Central Asian republics: President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani is convinced that the "glory of Islam is being revived" there.

However, sermons on Islam are not enough to consolidate Iran's influence in Central Asia. The young states are experiencing great economic difficulties, so it is not so much ideas that they expect from Tehran as real financial, economic, and technical assistance. That is where Iran's problems begin. It is in no position to support the objects of its desired attention, because it has enough difficulties of its own. Since the victorious Islamic revolution and the war with Iraq, Tehran itself needs foreign loans and credits and Western technology, has an impressive state budget deficit, and can barely make ends meet in the financial sphere. Things are not going too well with foreign trade either. The main commodities which Iran can offer for export are oil, gas, pistachios, and carpets, but the Central Asian countries already have these themselves. They are also dissatisfied that Iran cannot sell food, which it is forced to import from abroad. After all, it is food that the majority of the former Soviet republics really need.

Tehran has decided that it can strengthen its influence via regional associations of which it is a member. In particular, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), which used to consist of Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan. In February 1992, however—after due indoctrination by Tehran—Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan were admitted to its ranks, and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan were given observer status. Essentially, Iran is trying to use the ECO to create a so-called "Islamic common market," which would then encompass other countries as well, particularly Afghanistan.

Another attempt at unification was made at the beginning of 1992, when five countries (Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan) decided, on Iran's initiative, to set up the Caspian States Cooperation Organization, with its headquarters, naturally, in Tehran. The following were stated as its main objectives: fishing, shipping, protection of the environment, and oil and gas exploration and extraction in the Caspian and on the coastal shelf. Cooperation is a good thing, but some see it as opening up other horizons. M. Karrubi, former speaker of the Iranian parliament, has openly said that "for the first time in several centuries, the Caspian Sea is once again becoming Islamic waters." Moreover, the treaty signed in the 19th century between Iran and czarist Russia banning Tehran's ships from the Caspian Sea is now considered invalid by Iran (!). Looking ahead, Iranian politicians plan to make the Caspian Sea the main axis of their cooperation with all Central Asian countries and with Russia. This cooperation will be tinged with Islamic fundamentalism, however.

But Iran is finding it cramped in Central Asia. After the breakup of the USSR, it was not the only one to immediately rush into the region: Other countries also hope to establish their influence there. The list is long: Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India. Most active is Turkey, which is relying on the closeness of the Turkic language and culture prevalent in all the Central Asian republics, apart from Tajikistan. Its relations also benefit from the fact that these peoples are Sunni; in other words, they adhere to the same branch of Islam as the Turks. Turkey generally considers the Muslims of Central Asia to be "its brothers" and plans to create a "Turkic common market" to spite Iran with its plans for an "Islamic common market."

It is evident that Turkey wants to play a leading, decisive role in Central Asia, offering—in addition to substantial economic assistance and broad trade—its own "Turkish model" of society, which combines Islam with a secular state based on Western democracy.

It looks as if this model could be preferable to the export of Islamic revolution from Tehran. So two foreign forces are already fierce rivals in Central Asia. We should also point out that Turkey has the backing of the United States and the West as a whole, which fear the spread of Islamic fundamentalism in general, and in Central Asia in particular. They give Turkey considerable financial and economic assistance, which is bound to provoke Iran's displeasure. It has reached the stage where the well-known radical, Ayatollah 'Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, has accused Ankara of "undermining Iran's positions in the former USSR to the advantage of the United States."

Naturally, the struggle for influence will not cease. The stakes are high: Some are dreaming of a grand caliphate in Central Asia. But the methods of achieving this aim—with the emphasis on Islamic fundamentalism—are clearly inadequate. Islam alone is not enough to consolidate one's influence: Serious capital investments, the latest technology, and more liberal religious ideas are needed. After all, at present the majority of Central Asian countries look primarily to Turkey, which is backed by Western countries with their potential for giving economic, financial, and technical assistance. So the rivalry will evidently proceed with variable success, unless, of course, the United States and Western Europe feel it necessary to give Turkey some fairly hefty aid, because they regard it as an outpost of their advance into the Central Asian republics.

How the Iranians Work

Turkmenistan: Tehran maintains very close political, economic, and cultural ties with Ashgabat. More than 10 agreements have been concluded in the trade sphere alone. In particular, an accord was reached in March 1992 on Iran supplying 211 tonnes of food in exchange for 100 tonnes of cotton. The border is open at the Gowdan section. One major cooperation project is the construction of a railroad from Ashgabat to Mashhad and onward through Iran to the Persian Gulf.

Tajikistan: Iran attaches great importance to developing ties with Dushanbe, because the people of this republic speak the same Persian language as Iran and have the same customs and culture, although they profess Sunni Islam. Concentrating attention on the development of religious and cultural ties, Tehran welcomed the legalization of the Islamic Revival Party's activity in the republic in fall 1991; this party's program says that it stands for the "creation of an Islamic state." Tehran gives the party aid. The civil war in Tajikistan and the defeat of proponents of Islam have caused deep dissatisfaction in Tehran. Iran has given Dushanbe credit worth $50 million and has said that it will supply 300,000 tonnes of oil free of charge. Tajikistan has adopted the Persian alphabet.

Kazakhstan: Iran is interested in developing relations with one of the industrially developed countries of Central Asia, particularly with regard to building nuclear weapons. It still hopes that it will succeed in obtaining secrets from Kazakhstan about building nuclear weapons and that it will be able to get hold of nuclear specialists who could help Iran to build an "Islamic atom bomb."

Uzbekistan: Turkey was the first to establish diplomatic relations with Uzbekistan. Since then, Tashkent has officially said that it will only follow the "Turkish model" of development and that it will only cooperate with Iran in the field of transport and communications. Uzbek President I. Karimov has visited Iran, but there has been no rapprochement between the two countries.

Kyrgystan: Iran's weakest ties are with Bishkek, whose leadership has said that it rejects Islamic fundamentalism and will look to the West. Apart from anything else, Tehran is attracted in its ties with Kyrgystan by the possibility of buying enriched uranium and obtaining the secrets of its production.

Korotchenya, Shokhin on Upcoming CIS Meeting

OW0903163493 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1605 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Report by Andrey Pershin, Andrey Petrovskiy, and Vladimir Shishlin; edited by Boris Grishchenko; from the "Presidential Bulletin" feature—following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] In the words of Ivan Korotchenya, coordinator of the Working Group of the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] councils of the heads of states and heads of governments, the main issue at the March 12 session of the CIS heads of governments in Moscow will be a draft agreement on the Commonwealth Coordinating and Advisory Committee. Mr Korotchenya has arrived in the Russian capital to make preparations for the coming meeting of CIS prime ministers.

In an interview for an Interfax correspondent, Ivan Korotchenya opined that the CIS Coordinating and Advisory Committee will only be efficient provided deputy prime ministers of the Commonwealth governments in charge of relations with their CIS partners, worked in it on a permanent basis.

Russia has come up with an initiative to set up a CIS coordinating and advisory structure on principles "long tested by the European Community." In an interview for Interfax, Russia's deputy prime minister Aleksandr Shokhin, who is monitoring the problems of cooperation among the republics of the former Soviet Union, revealed that Russia sent its proposals on the formation of the CIS Coordinating and Advisory Committee to CIS headquarters in Minsk on February 9.

According to the draft CIS Charter, which was signed by seven of the nine Commonwealth leaders, the Coordinating and Advisory Committee is expected to replace the existing Working Group of the CIS councils of the heads of states and heads of governments.

Aleksandr Shokhin emphasized that the Russian Federation is "not interested in setting up any CIS government superstructures." On the contrary, in compliance with the EC pattern, the CIS sessions could be presided over, in turn, by all of the CIS states. Mr Shokhin said he is hopeful that "such a pattern would encourage Ukraine, Moldova, and Turkmenistan to exercise a more pragmatic approach with respect to the CIS." Russian government experts explained to Interfax Russia's proposal that Commonwealth states take turns representing themselves for a six-month term in the CIS advisory structure on the level of deputy prime ministers. In the meantime, each CIS state will be represented in the Committee on the permanent basis by its plenipotentiary.

In the words of Mr Korotchenya, the preliminary agenda of March 11 session includes 10 issues (its initial variant was published by Presidential Bulletin 276—IF [INTERFAX]).

On Tuesday [9 March], the coordinator of the Working Group is meeting with Russia's Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin to address issues related to the meeting of the heads of governments.

Ivan Korotchenya noted that the agreement in regards to the meeting of the CIS councils of the heads of states and heads of governments in Yerevan on April 30 remains in force, indicating that preparations for this meeting are in progress according to plan.

IF Note: In an interview for an Interfax correspondent in Minsk on Tuesday [9 March], Belarus Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kebich spoke of the need to alter the agenda for the prime ministers' meeting. In his opinion, the draft contains a number of technical issues which "could be addressed on a lower level." In the meantime, Mr Kebich observed, the list of the agreements to be signed "clearly lacks the economy-related documents which provide answers to the question of how we will live in the future."

Foreign Ministers of Baltic States Meet in Tallinn

OW0903121593 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1058 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The foreign ministers of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia Trivimi Velliste, Povilas Gylys and Georg Andreyev are holding a conference in Tallinn to coordinate the steps of their ministries.

According to the press service of the Estonian Foreign Ministry, Velliste, Gylys and Andreyev will discuss preparations for a conference of foreign ministers of the Council of Baltic states in mid-March in Helsinki.

The three sides are also expected to coordinate their "Eastern policy". A joint document is believed to be signed.

Dissatisfied With UN Membership Fee

WS1003090193 Tallinn ETA NEWS RELEASE in English 1944 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] Tallinn, 9 March 1993—Foreign Ministers of the three Baltic countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, expressed dissatisfaction over United Nations decision to calculate their membership fee on the basis of the former Soviet Union's national income.

It is unacceptable for the Baltic countries as the countries legally never belonged to the Soviet Union, the three ministers, Trivimi Velliste from Estonia, Georg Andreyev from Latvia and Povilas Gylys from Lithuania, agreed upon their first annual meeting in Tallinn.

It is an attempt by the "UN bureaucracy" to use Soviet Union's official statistics that showed the country's national income bigger than it actually was, Velliste said.

In a joint statement adopted at the meeting the ministers stressed the importance of co-ordinating the foreign and security policy of the three countries.

The most urgent problem facing the countries is Russian troop pullout. The ministers called for "rapid, compete and orderly" withdrawal of forces according to the 1992 Helsinki Document.

The ministers decided to meet regularly twice a year while the chairmanship of the meetings will rotate following each regular meeting held between March 1—April 30 and October 1—November 30. Extraordinary meetings may take place following a demand from one of the ministers at the consent of his counterparts in the two other countries, according to the meeting protocol.

The ministers decided to launch five working groups responsible for regular Baltic co-operation. It is not yet possible to appoint economic and cultural attaches to each others capitals due to lack of resources, the ministers agreed.

The ministers' next meeting will take place either in October or November.

Issue Communique on Meeting

OW0903185493 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1840 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian foreign ministers, Trivimi Velliste, Georg Andrejev and Povilas Gylys, have stated their commitment to continuing the countries' trilateral cooperation. In their communique of March 9 crowning the results of their tripartite meeting in Tallinn, the parties designate their countries' common objectives in promoting democratic institutions and express transition to market economy.

The ministers profess that "integration of Estonian, Latvia and Lithuania into the European economic and political structures, as well as into the European security system will be facilitated by their coordinated efforts in pursuing their domestic and foreign policies." The communique contains a call to the Russian Federation to complete the pullout of the its troops from the territory of the Baltic states as soon as possible.

Andrejev, Gylys, and Velliste, Andrejev held a news conference the same day at which they said, in particular, that coordinated efforts aimed to have Russian forces withdrawn from the territory of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia should be the priority area for cooperation among the foreign ministries of the three countries.

The ministers said the pullout of Russian forces and relations with Russia were among the main subjects at their meeting. They said they had no essential disagreements on that score and could see no serious changes in Russia's policy vis-a-vis the Baltics. Particular concern about the problem was expressed by Velliste and Andrejev. The two ministers said there were Russian forces stationed in the capitals of Estonia and Latvia, and their presence posed a direct threat to those countries.

Gylys said it could not be ruled out that Russia's withdrawal of its forces from Vilnius was one of the moves in its "divide and rule" policy.

Stressing the need for both political and military cooperation, the three ministers said it would be a mistake to unite the Baltic countries into a military bloc.

The ministers said their opinions coincided on other problems as well. Thus, agreements on the prevention of dual taxation, the mutual protection of investments, and customs policies were nearly ready to be signed. The ministers have agreed to meet twice a year, in spring and summer. Urgent matters will be handled by five working group, each of them will be in charge of a specific area: general politics, security, economics, consular relations, and the Baltic states' membership in other international organizations.

The ministers said the sums the Baltic states would have to pay as admission dues to the United Nations were too high. Velliste said that, according to the UN regulations, the amount to be paid by a state depends on the latter's average living standards. The Soviet Union, however, provided the UN with forged statistics, which "had nothing at all to do with reality, and as a result we now have to pay an exorbitant sum. We cannot accept this," he said.

ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 10 Mar

LD1003065193 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0634 GMT 10 Mar 93

["Press Review"—ITAR-TASS headline]

[Text] Moscow March 10 TASS—The Extraordinary Eighth Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation, that opens today, is in the focus of attention of today's newspapers.

According to KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, the Congress is beginning its work in conditions which do not promote intolerance: Society is openly rejecting political confrontation, and only those Russians for whom politics became a sort of profession have not lost the taste for rallies and demonstrations.

NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA carries articles about the Tuesday [9 March] session of the Council of Heads of the Republics integrated in the Russian Federation under the headlines "Heads of Republics Side With Yeltsin, Heads of Councils (Soviets)—With Khasbulatov" and "President Suggested That the Congress Act in Line With Federal Treaty, and Speaker Suggested Revision of Some Articles of the Declaration of Russia's Sovereignty." The newspaper stresses that the new trends, mentioned in the lead of today's issue, will probably

become the core of the political discussion at the Congress..." [quotation marks as received]

The statement of the Council says that in the critical situation, that has taken shape in the country, it is necessary to define clearly the fundamentals of Russia's statehood. "We are sure that the system of authority should be based on the federal treaty and treaties between the Russian Federation and individual republics on the mutual delegation of prerogatives, which are the founding documents of the renewed Russia." The newspaper writes that, in the opinion of Boris Yeltsin, the federal treaty "should become a new ideology for building the Russian Federation..."

At the same time, the newspaper frontpages fragments of the appeal to the Congress of the Heads of Councils (Soviets) of the republics, territories, regions and autonomous entities integrated in the Russian Federation, as well as the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg. According to the appeal, the holding of the "ill-prepared referendum" on the fundamentals of the new Russian constitution is not only undesirable, but also dangerous, because, they maintain, it may result in the disintegration of Russia and have most unpredictable consequences.

TRUD urges the Congress of People's Deputies to realise that if the balance of authority is not restored in the near future, the plan of actions approved by the Russian Government a month ago will remain unfulfilled, because in the current situation the government cannot function normally. "It is only agreement that will help us overcome the deadlock and get down to resolving economic problems," the newspaper stresses.

PRAVDA and SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA frontpage the article by Gennadiy Zyuganov, chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, in which he comments on the forthcoming congress. He believes there is no constitutional crisis in the country. The current situation is the result of the desire of the president and government to divert the attention of people from the economic crisis, which has approached the point of no return, and to present it as the crisis of the system of state setup.

KRASNAYA ZVEZDA reports the meeting on March 5 of Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev and heads and representatives of officers' meetings of the Moscow military district and the Moscow Garrison. The newspaper highlights the minister's words that "the present management of the Armed Forces will not let the Army turn right or left. It will strictly abide only by laws and the Russian Constitution."

NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA carries an interview with Sergey Stankevich, the president's adviser for political matters. He believes that the conflict between the two branches of federal authority might be overcome through the "freezing" of the division of authority in the form in which it exists now until the adoption of a new constitution.

Yeltsin Sees No Alternative to Vance-Owen Plan

OW0903160393 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1554 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] President Boris Yeltsin of Russia made an official statement on Yugoslavia Tuesday [9 March]. He said that "the New York round of negotiations has confirmed the lack of an alternative to the Vance-Owen plan as the basis for resolving the conflict in Bosnia and Hercegovina." The Russian president stated that the "warring sides face a choice between endorsing the basic provisions of the plan and bearing the responsibility for further bloodshed." The UN Security Council will also have to make appropriate conclusions, the statement says.

Yeltsin's statement was read at a news conference in Moscow on Tuesday by Vitaliy Churkin, Deputy Foreign Minister and special envoy of the Russian president at the negotiations on resolving the Yugoslavian conflict who had attended the New York consultations.

He said that two warring sides, Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Serbs, did not "fully agree" to implementing the Vance-Owen plan. He declined answering an Interfax question, which side had more reservations about the plan that was put forward by the cochairmen of the Geneva peace conference. Churkin emphasized that there is no alternative to the Vance-Owen plan and its fundamentals are unquestionable.

Churkin regarded numerous objections made by the warring sides as "not quite serious", on a closer look. He made it clear that the plan envisages preserving a unified state of Bosnia and Hercegovina, albeit "decentralized" rather than "unitary." The deputy minister also insisted that, in Moscow's thinking as soon Bosnian Serbs agree to implementing the plan, "it will be an appropriate time for loosening and gradual lifting of the sanctions against Belgrade." He stated that the positions of Russia and the EC on resolving the Yugoslavian crisis "are very close." Churkin said that Russia is considering running a second humanitarian convoy into Sarajevo. The first one, he said, had made several trips to Sarajevo from Belgrade. A second one may operate from Zagreb.

Churkin confirmed that Russian aircraft will share in delivery of humanitarian aid to Bosnia and Hercegovina but doubted whether the flights can start this week.

Further on Churkin Remarks

LD0903173093 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1550 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS diplomatic correspondent Sergey Postanogov]

[Text] Moscow, 9 Mar (ITAR-TASS)—"The round of talks held in New York confirmed the absence of any realistic alternative to the Vance-Owen plan as a basis for a settlement in Bosnia-Hercegovina. The sides to the conflict face a choice: To approve the basic elements of this plan or to assume responsibility for further bloodshed," according to a statement by President Boris Yeltsin on settlement of the crisis in former Yugoslavia. This document was read at the start of a news conference held here today by Vitaliy Churkin, special representative of the Russian Federation president at the talks on former Yugoslavia and Russia's deputy minister for foreign affairs.

He highly assessed the activities of Vance and Owen and noted that they have demonstrated "an extremely highly qualified and proper" approach to the matter. Speaking about Russia's participation in settling this complex conflict, the Russian diplomat said that the policy of Russian diplomacy lies in "a well-balanced and objective" approach. The Russian side, he continued, is working in contact with all the parties interested in settling the conflict and reacts to a change in the negotiation process situation in the most objective way possible.

Speaking about continuing military actions in Bosnia, Vitaliy Churkin noted that any actions leading to an escalation of the armed struggle in Bosnia should be given a relevant assessment irrespective of who is initiating them. "Only such an approach," he said, "can lead to a decrease in the intensity of armed fighting while the process of achieving a political settlement is underway."

Vitaliy Churkin pointed out the persisting acuteness of humanitarian problems in Bosnia. He informed journalists that the Russian humanitarian convoy has already performed a number of successful trips from Belgrade to Sarajevo; it is planned to expand its composition and also to arrange the work of the second humanitarian convoy to deliver aid from Zagreb to Bosnia. A decision has been made to involve Russian aircraft in humanitarian aid air-drops. "Russia is firmly and categorically against any attempts to impede the delivery of humanitarian aid, especially when they are called on to play a provocative role," Vitaliy Churkin stressed.

Answering journalists' questions about the possibility of softening the UN Security Council's sanctions against the former Yugoslavia, the Russian diplomat said that during the signing of the Vance-Owen plan by the conflicting sides it will be possible to raise the question of the softening of sanctions that were adopted earlier. Vitaliy Churkin noted that the presence of Russian mercenaries in Yugoslavia and their participation in military actions is "a sad fact." The competent bodies are studying this question at this time and the adoption of a law "which would prevent such a phenomenon as mercenaries" is being planned for the future, he reported.

At the end of the news conference, answering a question about the prospects of stopping the confrontation in the former Yugoslavia, Vitaliy Churkin expressed the opinion that "a settlement is possible in the nearest future."

Social Democratic Center Urges Aid for Serbia, Montenegro

OW0903181893 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1457 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Report by diplomatic correspondents Andrey Borodin, Igor Porshnev, and Dimitriy Voskoboynikov; from the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature—following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The population of Serbia and Montenegro needs international humanitarian aid "no less" than the population of Bosnia-Hercegovina does, said the Russian Social Democratic Center in its statement published in Moscow on Tuesday [9 March].

The document calls on Russia's parliament and on the parliaments and governments of all UN member states "to consider as soon as possible the possibility of supplying Serbia and Montenegro with humanitarian commodities: fuel to ensure uninterrupted work for electric power stations and heat-and-power plants, medicines and foods."

According to the center, such an action could be the first step toward lifting all sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro, which, if continued, "will inevitably lead to aggravating the Yugoslav crisis."

The information on a news conference given by the special envoy of the Russian president at the talks on a settlement in former Yugoslavia, Deputy Foreign Minister Vitaliy Churkin, will be published in the evening edition of Interfax's news bulletin.

Bulgarian Minister Seeks To Revive Economic Ties

MK0903122093 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 6 Mar 93 p 11

[Svetlana Sukhova report: "Bulgaria and Russia Try To Resolve Payments Problem"]

[Text] Bulgarian Vice Premier Valentin Karabashev, who is also trade minister, yesterday had another meeting in Moscow with the Russian ministers of the economy, finance, and foreign economic relations. This time Karabashev held talks with each minister individually. The talks covered the problems of mutual nonpayments and debts, and also the preparation of agreements on preventing dual taxation and mutual protection of investments that are planned to be signed in the second quarter of 1993. During the talks it was decided to set up a working group to provide a feasibility study for the construction of a Varna-Novorossiysk railroad and ferry link.

At present trade and economic links between Russia and Bulgaria are in a state of crisis, and the overall picture has not been improved even by some individual bursts of activity. Nonetheless, the potential for economic cooperation between the two countries remains high. Bulgaria is insisting on keeping for the current year last year's clearing mechanism in trade with Russia. At the same time, the shortage of centralized currency resources that Moscow is experiencing prevents it from diverting any to the blocked accounts to effect settlements with Bulgaria. This is why 75 percent of bilateral trade exchange in 1992 was based on direct commercial contracts. In this situation Russia's position consists in expanding contacts between firms, but excluding state obligations.

A considerable proportion of trade and economic relations between the USSR and Bulgaria consisted of the export of technical assistance and services. In particular, funds from the former USSR were used to build such industries in Bulgaria as power engineering, metallurgy, and petrochemicals. As has been repeatedly noted during Valentin Karabashev's latest visit to Moscow, one of the most serious problems in Russian-Bulgarian relations today is the outstanding payment and settlements issue inherited from the former USSR. Today Russia owes Bulgaria some 670 million transfer rubles from the CEMA days.

The debt problems of Bulgaria itself, however, are probably even more serious: In 1991, Sofia imposed a moratorium on the payment of its foreign debt in hard currency. As a result, payments to the banks with a share of Union capital on credits extended to Bulgarian organizations on orders from the Union government virtually ceased. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat Russia has transferred considerable hard currency sums from its own budget resources to replenish these banks' reserve funds. According to the Russian Bank for Foreign Economic Activity, as of 1 January 1992 Bulgarian banks owed $700 million.

In the course of yesterday's talks Russia suggested to Bulgaria that agreement should be reached on mutual hard currency debt clearance, in equal sums. Over the many years that the clearing system existed, the USSR gave Bulgaria direct financial assistance (in 1978 it amounted to 2.8 billion transfer rubles). Russia, therefore, now does not agree with Bulgaria that it should simply convert the sum of 670 million transfer rubles into U.S. dollars and credit it as Russia's debt.

"Volume of Trade and Economic Turnover Between Russia and Bulgaria":

—The overall volume of centralized deliveries in 1992 amounted to $0.3 billion. In 1991 the volume of centralized deliveries between Moscow and Sofia was $2.3 billion.

—Only 268,000 tonnes of oil was actually supplied to Bulgaria out of the 3 million tonnes stipulated for delivery.

—In 1992, over 75 percent of the trade turnover between Russian and Bulgaria was based on direct commercial contacts outside centralized lists.

—The remaining current balance in payments and settlements inherited from the USSR is estimated at 670 million transfer rubles in Bulgaria's favor.

Commander of Forces in Germany Views Withdrawal

OW1003014093 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel and Orbita Networks in Russian 1945 GMT 4 Mar 93

[Studio interview with Colonel General Matvey Prokopyevich Burlakov, commander of the Western Group of Forces in Germany, by Mikhail Solntsev; from the "Utro" program—live]

[Text] [Solntsev] Good morning. We are continuing our program, and today we have Colonel General Matvey Prokopyevich Burlakov in our studio. Good morning, Comrade General.

[Burlakov] Good morning.

[Solntsev] Matvey Prokopyevich is the commander of our Western Group of Forces in Germany, so we plan to talk about the situation in your Group of Forces. What does our Group of Forces in Germany look like today?

[Burlakov] First, the Group of Forces in Germany, created after World War II, after the Great Patriotic War, was the vanguard of our Armed Forces. As of 1 January 1991, the group numbered 546,000 people, of whom 340,00 were servicemen. There were 111,000 units of equipment and weapons and 2.5 million tonnes of materiel.

You know that Germany was unified and that in October 1990, the group was given a new task: preparation for and withdrawal to the territory of what was then the USSR and is now Russia.

[Solntsev] This withdrawal is now under way, so how many subordinates do you have today?

[Burlakov] I would like to say that over a period of two years we have fulfilled our withdrawal plan 100 percent, that 60 percent of our group has been withdrawn. This is 330,000 people, 72,000 units of equipment, and 1.5 million tonnes of materiel. What I would like to stress is that we withdrew 31,000 families of officers and warrant officers without apartments. This is a concern of ours, because far from everyone has been provided with housing.

[Solntsev] Matvey Prokopyevich, this is a very important problem, and we will return to it. But right now, I would like to ask you: All the weapons and materiel and technical equipment that the group now has at its disposal, are they all being withdrawn to Russian territory? Is anything being left over there?

[Burlakov] We are withdrawing 100 percent of the equipment and weapons. Several of our organizations are trying to sell some of our materiel. This is no easy task, because the German market is basically saturated with goods and the sales process is proceeding very slowly. Regarding fixed assets—which we assessed at 10.5 billion German marks using German valuation methods—unfortunately, we are leaving them on German territory and turning over to the Germans.

[Solntsev] You are turning it over without any compensation?

[Burlakov] You may recall that in December 1992, Boris Nikolayevich and Chancellor Kohl agreed that there would be an additional 550 million [currency not specified] in compensation. Of course, this is no great consolation when compared to our assessment of 10 billion, so we have now decided that everything that can be dismantled, everything prefabricated such as storage facilities and light structures, will be dismantled by us to take to Russia for assembly and auxiliary use at new redeployment locations.

[Solntsev] Besides the Russian Group of Forces in Germany, there are NATO bloc forces there, our former allies in the anti-Hitler coalition. Are their troops leaving German territory now or are they staying?

[Burlakov] No, all troops are withdrawing. American, French, and British troops are being withdrawn. However, it should be noted that they do not yet have a final schedule. We have a final target date of 31 August 1994. The Americans plan to leave 100,000-150,000 men in Europe. Apparently, this will be the case. The French and British are withdrawing, yet we do not know when this will be completed. They are withdrawing at a much slower rate than we are.

[Solntsev] So one could talk about a certain inadequacy in their withdrawal schedule.

[Burlakov] Yes we could.

[Solntsev] Matvey Prokopyevich, please tell us how your relations, as commander of the Western Group of Forces, are taking shape with the German authorities and how the relations of your subordinates with ordinary rank-and-file German citizens are shaping up?

[Burlakov] When I arrived in December 1990, I was a bit wary. I should say that there is very good rapport between the German leaders, the leaders of German lander, and the population in general and the group. We find understanding practically everywhere, and the fact that we are successfully fulfilling our withdrawal tasks today is no small credit to the German side. They are very actively helping us. Of course, they have a greater interest in this than we do, but their assistance is successful.

There are extremist elements today, particularly among the youth, unfortunately. They have been attacking the hostels of foreign citizens, which also has affected us to some extent, although....

[Solntsev, interrupting] How are the troops reacting to this?

[Burlakov] The troops are ready; we are ready for any provocation, which is why we are taking all necessary measures. Overall, there were more than 200 various offenses against our citizens last year; eight of our people were killed by German extremists. But I repeat: This

does not characterize all Germans. The German people are generally very kind to our Russian people.

[Solntsev] Despite the fact that a withdrawal of troops from Germany is being implemented, are you continuing combat training? Are flights of combat aircraft still being carried out? How do your military activities look now?

[Burlakov] Yes, of course this is what keeps us going. We are continuing preparations for withdrawal and the withdrawal itself, while those who are scheduled to leave later are continuing combat training. Exercises, flights, and firing practice are continuing. In other words, a full military life is under way among the troops. Today we do not view this simply as an element for increasing our combat readiness but as an element in organization, order, and discipline.

[Solntsev] Order and discipline are very important concepts. There have been accusations in the German media that there are many offenses being committed by our servicemen. What can you say about this?

[Burlakov] Not only the German media, but also the Russian media have often criticized us. I should say that we study the dynamics of this criticism. In 1991, we were criticized for having a large number of deserters. It is true. We have half a million people, and 250 ran away.

[Solntsev] From half a million.

[Burlakov] Yes, from half a million. Of course this is a minute number; nevertheless, we were subjected to intense criticism for this. Later, 13 people returned. We photographed them on film and showed it to all our personnel. Today, the stream of deserters has dried up. The criticism stopped, but a new wave of criticism began. Now we are being criticized for trading in arms and for selling ammunition, and they allege that our soldiers and officers are wandering around the forests bothering the German public.

[Solntsev] There are even accusations that Col. Gen. Burlakov is the head of the corrupt element in the Western Group of Forces.

[Burlakov] Yes. I ought to say that from 1946 up to the present day we have investigated the disappearance of 69 units of firearms lost during this period of time. Nobody has ever sold any kind of weapon. Today we are being criticized for allegedly selling off our Russian property and for stuffing our pockets, and that our officers are impoverished. I must say that this is a pack of lies. Nobody is stuffing his pockets. We are not personally engaged in any trade. We have a directorate for trade in the Defense Ministry. Prior to that, our trading organization was a presidential commission that then became a government commission headed by Minister Arapov. Unfortunately, this commission was not particularly interested in trade, and commercial operations that it organized were quite bad.

In fact, we did not trade anything and did not even make any money for the construction of housing for our officers and warrant officers. Now, this naturally bothers us. So I reject any attacks whatsoever—be they against myself, the leadership, or the group's personnel—that we are linked with any mafia organizations or that we are engaged in illegal activities. I want to assure all television viewers that the Group of Forces is a healthy organism. Only a healthy organism can cope with the enormous task of preparing for and implementing the withdrawal.

[Solntsev] Regarding the withdrawal: It is a withdrawal into Russia, not just to any place. What awaits your subordinates here on Russian soil? A lot is being said and written about this. What information could you add, General?

[Burlakov] I must say that this concerns us most of all. It concerns us because in two years we have withdrawn 21,000 families of officers and warrant officers who do not have apartments. During this time, in accordance with a program worth 7.8 billion German marks, we received 2,212 apartments—in other words, about 10 percent of what was needed. At the same time, the Ukraine received 48 percent of the apartments they need for officers withdrawn from the Western Group of Forces, and Belarus received 134 percent of apartments constructed in Belarus for withdrawn officers. So once again, we suffer the most.

The main thing is that prospects today remain pretty bleak. This year, we will see another 15,000 people without apartments; so by the end of the year, we will have a total of 33,000. According to the German program, we are to receive only 5,700 apartments. This is unsatisfactory to us. So in January....

[Solntsev, interrupting] What can be done?

[Burlakov] There was a meeting of the joint Russian-German commission, of which I am cochairman, in January. I requested that the German side allocate funds to build 20,000-23,000 apartments in 1993 and that construction of all 18 military townships that are to be built in Russia should begin this year, with a commissioning target in the first half of 1994 at the latest. In that case, we would receive some 28,000 apartments and this would satisfy most of us. Second....

[Solntsev, interrupting] In other words...

[Burlakov, continuing] I would like... Excuse me, please....

[Solntsev] Yes, go on please.

[Burlakov] ...second, we ourselves, at the personal expense of our officers and with the funds of the Group of Forces, will purchase apartments from the administrations of oblasts and krays. I would like to appeal to them. We are prepared to buy apartments—of course, possibly not for the full price, because we simply do not have the funds for the full price—for at least 50, 60, or 70 percent of the full price, but if the heads of administrations sell them to us, we would pay in freely convertible currency. If they do not sell them, we will still send our

people back; they will still return, even without apartments. So I appeal to the heads of administrations to treat our problem with the utmost understanding. We are ready to purchase apartments.

[Solntsev] I would like to thank you for your responses to the "Utro" program's questions. Now let us change our conversation from it military tone to the topic of spring. This is the last "Utro" program before the 8 March [Women's Day] holiday. What would you like to say, Comrade General?

[Burlakov] Allow me, on behalf of the troops of the Western Group of Forces, and probably all the Armed Forces, to greet our charming women—our mothers, wives, and sisters—on this wonderful holiday, the holiday of spring, to wish them good health and success and more optimism in our difficult times, with hopes that Russia will rise again and our charming women will live the way normal Soviet... [pauses] Russian women should live.

[Solntsev] Thank you very much. Our guest on the "Utro" program was Col. Gen. Matvey Prokopyevich Burlakov, commander in chief of the Western Group of Forces, which is deployed in Germany. Thank you very much and all the best.

[Burlakov] Thank you.

Shokhin Says West's Debt Repayment Plan 'Unrealistic'

MK0903115293 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 6 Mar 93 p 2

[Anastasiya Romashkevich report: "Shokhin on Russia's Debts. Russia Hopes To Solve Debt Problem"]

[Text] It will be hard for Russia to negotiate an acceptable foreign debt restructuring formula because, as Russian Vice Premier Aleksandr Shokhin told journalists at a press conference yesterday, the West is guided by an unrealistic approach in regard to Russia. Taking stock of his visit to the United States, one of whose objectives was to secure a resumption of American agricultural supplies to Russia, the vice premier said Russia should not have to pay its credit bills until its overall foreign debt has been restructured.

Shokhin reported that at the end of 1992 Western creditors had suggested to Russia an arrangement for servicing its debts in 1993 according to which Russia owes, according to their estimates, $3.5 billion ($2.75 billion to the Paris Club and $0.75 billion to the London Club.) Russian experts think, however, that the suggested formula would lead to the payment of $5.1 billion (the formula underestimates payments to commercial banks, and takes no account of payments on bonds, and restructuring interest). According to Shokhin, Russia could even pay $5.1 billion, but for that it would have to reorient its oil and gas export from CIS countries to the West.

Shokhin also noted that the creditors' approach to Russia is generally unrealistic because they are hoping it will pay them $18 billion in 1994. Moscow believes that payments should be increased gradually. On prospects for writing off the debt, Shokhin said: "We have not reached that point yet." Talks with the Paris Club are also being complicated by Ukraine's stance. Laying claim to part of the USSR's assets, Ukraine would also like to pay its own debts, but it does not recognize the USSR's 1991 debts because it got nothing from credits received that year.

Touching on his U.S. trip, Shokhin said that its aim had been to secure a resumption of deliveries against the agricultural credits. The problem arose last November. While the credits total $900 million, as little as $100 million has been fully used. The problem is that restructuring presupposes a deferment of all Russian debts, not just those to the Paris and London Clubs. Thus, the American credits are also subject to deferment. Shokhin saw as his objective to "bring to the notice of the Unites States" the fact that trade itself was in jeopardy, and that if supplies did not resume shortly, Russia, which will have to buy at least 16 million tonnes of grain in 1993, would have to go to some new markets. Some steps in this direction, according to Shokhin, are now being made: Russia has made deals with France and the EC on grain credits. The vice premier also observed that, in his opinion, it was not a good idea at all to resume payments against credits before making a decision on restructuring. He added that, in principle, and from the viewpoint of expenditure, the resumption of deliveries would cost the U.S. Administration as much as forced subsidies to their own farmers would cost if deliveries were put on hold.

Arms Race May Develop With U.S. in Asia

SK1003064293 Seoul YONHAP in English 0158 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Text] Moscow, March 9 (YONHAP)—An arms race is likely to heat up among Asian countries as Russia speeds up sales of military hardware in the region and the United States fights back.

Russia, seeing exports of military equipment as a solution to its economic woes, is penetrating Asian countries that are armed with U.S.-built arsenals.

Washington, in return, appears to be thinking of countering the Russian sales drive by offering the countries discounts, which will inevitably fan the arms race in the region, military sources here said Tuesday.

Russian Vice President Alexandr Rutskoy recently visited Malaysia and offered to sell sophisticated weaponry at bargain prices, and a Malaysian delegation is expected to visit Moscow soon to discuss a purchase worth some 760 million U.S. dollars.

The weaponry Russia intends to sell Malaysia include 18 MIG-29 jet fighters and MI-35 helicopters, the sources disclosed.

The Philippine Government is learnedly interested in Russian-built arms, while Taiwan might buy some hardware.

Russia has agreed to provide Beijing with 500 million dollars of state-of-the-art weaponry as way of repaying debts estimated at 1 billion dollars.

Meanwhile, Moscow regards South Korea, Pakistan and the Middle East as three big potential markets and is vigorously pushing to sell its arms to these countries, the sources said.

Along with legal arms sales, the sources were worried, undercover or illegal sales of Russian-produced weaponry may rise sharply.

Sources at the Russian Defense Ministry concede that high-tech weaponry has been slipping across Russia's borders recently along with the redeployment of Russian units that had been stationed in the Baltic countries, Czechoslovakia and Mongolia.

If the phenomenon goes on, Asia might emerge as the largest market for illegal weaponry, the sources anticipate.

Kozyrev Criticizes Khmer Rouge for 'Ethnic Cleansing'

OW0903152493 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1456 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Report by diplomatic correspondents Andrey Borodin, Igor Porshnev, and Dimitriy Voskoboynikov, and others; from the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature—following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Russia's Foreign Minister, Andrey Kozyrev, has strongly condemned the "terror" unleashed by the Khmer Rouge against ethnic Vietnamese living in Cambodia. The letter he sent on Tuesday [9 March] to his Vietnamese counterpart, Nguyen Manh Cam, says that such actions pose an attempt to press on the Cambodians once again "the policy and practice of "ethnic cleansing" that characterized the time when the Pol Pot men were in power.

The policy pursued by "Democratic Kampuchea" (DK) runs counter to the Paris Accords on Cambodia, and poses "a crying violation of the generally-accepted norms of international law," Kozyrev pointed out. "The efforts to build ethnic barriers and incite ethnic discord are extremely dangerous and fraught with unpredictable consequences," he stressed.

According to the Russian foreign minister, the policy pursued by the Khmer Rouge might put the process of settlement in Cambodia and the peaceful future of that nation in jeopardy. "Russia resolutely condemns the destructive stance taken by the leaders of the DK faction, and the acts of violence stemming from racial hatred," the letter says.

"Those who commit, or issue orders to commit, acts of 'ethnic cleansing' should be severely punished for their actions," the foreign minister said. At the same time he urged the other participants in the process of settlement in Cambodia to display firmness and restraint and not to yield to provocation. "The main task is to keep the peaceful movement toward national reconciliation in Cambodia from being disrupted" Kozyrev pointed out.

Japan To Assist in Destruction of ICBM Liquid Fuel

LD0903134493 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1322 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Vladimir Kutakhov]

[Text] Tokyo March 9 TASS—Japan intends to assist Russia in destroying liquid fuel from intercontinental ballistic missiles [ICBM] to be scrapped in compliance with the Russian-American treaty on the further reduction of strategic offensive weapons (START-2).

The well-informed YOMIURI newspaper reports this Tuesday that Tokyo plans to send a group of specialists to Russia in April who will determine what measures are necessary to destroy the fuel.

The Japanese government intends to announce its decision on this issue at the G-7 summit to be held in Tokyo this July.

The newspaper notes that, according to Western experts, there are some 100,000 tons of very toxic ICBM liquid fuel in Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Japanese specialists believe that the total cost to build and operate fuel storages may amount to 5.5 billion yen.

Therefore, they believe, the quick destruction of fuel from disassembled ballistic missiles will be the most acceptable version.

Additional Border Guards Sent to Tajik-Afghan Border

OW1003121293 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1110 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The Dushanbe headquarters of the Russian frontier troops have informed INTERFAX that on Wednesday, 170 Russian servicemen are arriving in Tajikistan from Pskov, a regional center in the northwest of Russia near the Estonian border. This contingent will be sent to the Khorog, Pyandzh, and Moskovskiy sections of the Tajik-Afghan border.

According to the same source, the decision to send an additional contingent of Russian frontier guards to the Tajik-Afghan border was taken in accordance with the agreements reached during the recent CIS summit in Minsk. Last December, an Uzbek battalion and, subsequently, 89 servicemen from Kyrgyzstan were sent to Tajikistan.

Although Kazakhstan expressed readiness to send its frontier guards to Tajikistan, it did not do so, because the Kazakh parliament has not yet endorsed this decision.

The headquarters report that according to the Russian law on military service in the hotbeds of tension, each of the 170 Russian servicemen arriving in Dushanbe on Wednesday, is a volunteer. These servicemen applied for service on the Tajik-Afghan border with their parents' consent.

Two Soviet POW's Return From Afghanistan

OW0903182493 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1454 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Two Soviet prisoners of war who were handed over to representatives of the Russian Foreign Ministry by Afghanistan last Monday intend to go to Moldova and Ukraine on Wednesday [10 March] as they are citizens of these countries. Interfax received this information from Leonid Biryukov, the chief of a section in charge for the search of prisoners of war formed in the committee on the affairs of soldiers-internationalists by the Council of CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] heads of states.

He also reported that the lists of those missing in Afghanistan contain 294 names of former Soviet servicemen.

According to the Defense Ministry, about 20-80 prisoners of war are still alive.

A former soldier Leonid Vylku and junior sergeant Viktor Nazarov who were considered missing in 1984 and 1985 had been kept in the base camp of the prominent field commander and now Afghanistan's Defense Minister Ahmad Shah Mas'ud until they were freed.

At a press conference held by the Committee on the affairs of soldiers-internationalists, 28-year old Vylku said that right on up to the last minute he had not known how life had changed in the former USSR. Otherwise, he said, it would have been possible to remain in a western country and "live better." "However, it was too late to do anything after we arrived at the airport," Vylku said.

Release of Others Sought

OW0903154593 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1456 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Report by diplomatic correspondents Andrey Borodin, Igor Porshnev, and Dimitriy Voskoboynikov, and others; from the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature—following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Moscow will continue to seek freedom for all the former Soviet prisoners of war held in Afghanistan, regardless of where they had come from: Russia or some other former Soviet republic. Interfax was told this by Bakhtier Khakimov, chief of the Russian Foreign Ministry's West Asia department. He said he hopes that the Afghans will display good will and, following the release of two POW, one from Moldova and the other from Ukraine, free the remaining ones.

At the moment units belonging to the Islamic Society of Afghanistan controlled by Ahmad Shah Mas'ud are planning to free three more POWs, said Khakimov. So far it's not known whether the former mujaheddin will hand them over to Russia or negotiate their return directly with Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan from where the POWs come from.

However most of the POWs are held by the units controlled by Golboddin Hekmatyar. "The agreement to appoint Hekmatyar Afghanistan's prime minister gives us a formal pretext for addressing him as the head of government, not as the leader of an Afghan grouping. It's possible that the situation in this area will also improve," the diplomat said.

According to different estimates, between 40 and 80 former Soviet prisoners of war are in Afghanistan now. As Khakimov pointed out, Moscow does not insist that they should necessarily return, but it demands that each of them should be granted the right to choose: to return home, remain in Afghanistan or settle down in some third country. If some POW declines to return, a meeting with his relatives should be arranged, so that they could have no doubts. For instance, the chief of Ahmad Shah Mas'ud's bodyguards, Nikolay Bystrov, said at a meeting with his sister that he is planning to return home, but not now. "This is his own choice," the diplomat said.

Eighth Congress of People's Deputies

Reportage on Activities on Eve of Congress

Yeltsin Secretary on Power Sharing

OW0903162893 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1603 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Report by Andrey Pershin, Andrey Petrovskiy, and Vladimir Shishlin; edited by Boris Grishchenko; from the "Presidential Bulletin" feature—following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The Russian president's press secretary, Vyacheslav Kostikov, confirmed at the meeting with journalists on Tuesday [9 March] that Boris Yeltsin would refrain from the referendum if the Congress of People's Deputies, which opens tomorrow, endorsed the proposed power-sharing agreement.

"If the congress fails to comply, the president will go ahead with the referendum," he said, commenting on the results of Tuesday's meeting of the Council of heads of RF [Russian Federation] republics which was chaired by President Yeltsin.

Asked whether President Yeltsin will take the floor on the first day of the congress, his spokesman indicated that the president will first try to diagnose the "dispositions of the people's deputies at the congress." He hopes, meanwhile, that the atmosphere at this congress will be more constructive than in December, and that the president's voice will be heard."

IF [INTERFAX] Note: The parliament has adopted two issues for the agenda of the 8th extraordinary Congress of the RF People's Deputies: national referendum on April 11 and observance of the RF Constitution by the supreme power bodies and government officials. On Sunday, President Yeltsin made public his four "presidential" questions to be brought to the referendum from his perspective.

(1) Do you agree that the Russian Federation should be a presidential republic?

(2) Do you agree that the supreme legislative body of the Russian Federation should be a bicameral parliament?

(3) Do you agree that the new Constitution of the Russian Federation should be endorsed by the Constitutional Assembly, as representative of the multi-national people of the Russian Federation?

(4) Do you agree that each citizen of the Russian Federation should be endowed with the right to own, use and dispose of land as a land owner?

In the opinion of many observers, the most likely outcome of the coming congress will be the revocation of the referendum in April. Most experts deem "problematic" that the president and the legislative branch would reach a constitutional agreement during the congress.

The republics' heads in the Russian Federation unanimously demurred the referendum, calling instead for a two-year moratorium on any referenda on Russian territory. (Taking part in the session were heads of all the republics in the Russian Federation except Chechnya).

In the words of the president's press secretary, Boris Yeltsin was trying to explore the heads' of the republics attitude toward the concept of a constitutional agreement. If the referendum were scrubbed, most of the Council members maintain they would be supportive of the agreement.

In the meantime, Vyacheslav Kostikov emphasized that President Yeltsin was not regarding the draft agreement proposed by him either as an ultimatum or as the final variant. The president, he said, is ready to modify it, taking into account the opinions expressed by RF republics' heads or the congress.

Following the meeting, Boris Yeltsin said in an interview for Interfax that he was fully content with its results. The president said the parties have addressed all the problems on the agenda of the session, placing special emphasis on the fact that all the documents were adopted by it without any visible controversy and that it was supported by most of the participants at the meeting.

The president's press secretary told journalists that the republics' leaders proposed to "somewhat shift the accents in the scenario of the congress," giving first priority to implementing the Federative Agreement rather than to the issue of the ongoing conflict between the legislative and executive branches. In this regard, the Council members have come up with a proposal to adopt the RF Law on how to implement the Federative Agreement, which, in their opinion, has long been overlooked. Vyacheslav Kostikov says the Council members are attributing this to the power crisis in Russia.

In answering Interfax' question, Vyacheslav Kostikov remarked that the communique of the Council of the heads of the RF republics is being drafted by the Security Council's secretary, Yuriy Skokov, in cooperation with the heads of the RF republics. In the words of Vyacheslav Kostikov, the president is supportive of the idea advanced by the republic's leaders regarding how the Federative Agreement is implemented. In the meantime, he reasons that it would take too long to develop the draft. Boris Yeltsin, he said, is primarily concerned with the existing conflict between the executive and legislative branches.

At a briefing in Moscow on Tuesday, speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov stated that he sees the proposal to sign a constitutional accord, passing a law on the division of power and others, as "little ideas" which were "not serious." He stressed that any changes in the balance of power could only be possible by introducing amendments in the current Constitution. Khasbulatov announced that parliamentary leaders strongly intend "to conduct the congress quietly, to pass restrained decisions." The speaker did not exclude the possibility

that the congress could once again raise the issue of impeaching the president, which was raised at previous assemblies.

Yeltsin Appoints Representatives

OW0903170093 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1641 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] RF [Russian Federation] President Boris Yeltsin has appointed his representatives at the extraordinary congress of peoples' deputies. They are: First Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Shumeyko, deputy prime ministers Sergey Shakray and Yuriy Yarov, head of the president's administration Sergey Filatov, secretary of the RF Security Council Yuriy Skokov, ministers Andrey Kozyrev of foreign affairs, Nikolay Fedorov of justice and Mikhail Fedotov of mass media, and head of the Federal Information Center Mikhail Poltoranin.

The RF president's interests at the congress will also be represented by Correspondent Member of Russia's Academy of Sciences Sergey Alekseyev, head of provisional administration in Ingushetia and North Ossetia Aleksandr Kotenkov, acting chief of the RF President's State Legal Department Ruslan Orekhov, deputy GRU chief Anatoliy Sliva and head of the analytical center of the RF president's administration Peter Sergeyev.

Kozyrev Views Congress

LD0903154693 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1523 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent]

[Text] Moscow March 9 TASS—"If the 8th Congress of People's Deputies decides to accept in this or that form the agreement proposed by the president, preparations will then be started for a referendum during which the population will be asked to answer the questions recently announced by the president. This is a clear-cut and sensible alternative, allowing the MPs to continue their work and to channel it in a constructive direction," Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev said on Monday.

"But there is another alternative, leading, in fact, to chaos and civil confrontation, and I don't think the bulk of our MPs, who will not gain any power be what it may, are ready to pull chestnuts out of the fire for the sake of a handful of intriguing politicians, now clamouring for power," he stated.

Turning to the problem of the Congress of People's Deputies, Kozyrev said, specifically, that "in the present-day conditions it could turn in many different directions. There are different scenarios—from the worst one to a quite acceptable version for the president and the government". It is most important that the congress should not be allowed to adopt an extremist stand on the future of the Russian Federation, on its future power structures, including a possible referendum.

"The referendum could be put off to a later date. But all the same we shall have to hold such a referendum at some other time in the future. The balance of forces at the congress is not bound to be in favour of the most extremist forces. Despite everything, most delegates will adhere to definitely reasonable views and will be able to form a centrist nucleus, which will surely find a necessary decision," Kozyrev stressed.

Grachev on Military Activity During Congress

OW1003042893 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel and Orbita Networks in Russian 2115 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Studio interview with Army General Pavel Sergeyevich Grachev, Russian defense minister, by Petr Orlov; from the "Utro" program—live]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Orlov] Pavel Sergeyevich, let us return to the present. When you spoke with the deputies, did any of them ask you about all the rumors concerning tanks in Moscow, and you understand, I cannot completely discount the truth of this. After all, history contains examples of this sort, unfortunately.

[Grachev] Yes, unfortunately examples of this sort have been recorded in history, but as you may recall, I also had a meeting with the people's deputies prior to the Seventh Congress, and I spoke in the Supreme Soviet. A similar situation has repeated itself prior to the Eighth Congress. I spoke before the Supreme Soviet presidium and now had the meeting with the people's deputies. I have said everywhere, and I repeat, that during the days the congress is in session, the Army will be engaged solely with its own affairs—combat training. Moreover, so as not to make certain levels of our society nervous, I have issued an order that during this period, all activities are to be confined to military installations and the movement of equipment is to be halted.

Nevertheless, there are plenty of conjectures, arguments, and information about the alleged preparation of a military plot and about the military's attempting to establish a dictatorship at this congress. Furthermore, the day before yesterday, I received information that is absolutely absurd. It said that the Defense Ministry together with the Air Force command was preparing a missile attack against certain targets during the congress. I declare that this is a lie, this is disinformation, and this is simply aimed at inciting passions and exacerbating nervousness among the Russian population. [passage omitted]

Army Politically 'Neutral'

LD0903152293 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1505 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Vadim Byrkin and Andrey Naryshkin]

[Text] Moscow March 9 TASS—Despite attempts of some Russian political forces to play "the Army card", the Russian armed forces remain neutral and do not involve in politics.

What is more, the Russian military leadership did not even put on the alert a single military unit during the 7th people's deputies congress, Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev told correspondents. The same approach is valid for this congress: Daily routine preserves in all Russian military units, sources at the Defence Ministry's Press Center told ITAR-TASS today.

Things are different outside military units and garrisons, as the Officers' Union in opposition to the Russian Defence Ministry has become increasingly active. Late in February the union organized the so-called All-Army Officers' Assembly.

The majority of assembly participants were retired officers and representatives of the opposition - from extremely left-wing (communists) to extremely right-wing (nationalists).

In the Russian armed forces meetings of representatives of officers' assemblies from military units at the level of military districts, groups of forces, fleets and specific armies were held late last week to discuss social and legal protection of servicemen and provision of troops' combatability.

Pavel Grachev told correspondents more than once in early March "the Army, actually, remains the only guarantor of stability and a major state instrument". In his opinion, this is perfectly well understood by people, acting from pseudo-patriotic positions, "who openly try to instigate the military for power actions and involve officers in political struggle".

In the words of Grachev, "they want to slacken the Army, split and undermine it from inside, in order to achieve their ambitious aims. Any methods are used for it - from gross lie, provocative statements, dreadful calls for taking arms and going to barricades to various political shows".

The official said the military want only to continue Army reforms, provide housing for servicemen, put in correspondence with law their lives and military routine and involve in their major business - military training.

On the eve of the 8th extraordinary congress to open in Moscow on Wednesday, the especially important is the minister's statement, saying "the armed forces' leadership will not allow a spilt in Army collectives and officers' participation in political games. Only laws and constitution shall and will regulate Army activities and servicemen rights and duties."

Democratic Russia Official on Powers

LD0903152493 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1440 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Oleg Velichko]

[Text] Moscow March 9 TASS—The 8th Congress of Russian People's Deputies to open here on Wednesday will focus on the division of powers between two power branches, Co-Chairman of the Democratic Russia Movement's Coordination Council Lev Ponomaryov told ITAR-TASS.

If the legislative and executive authorities fail to come to an agreement at the congress, a referendum on fundamental issues of the Russian constitution and elections of all power branches will be necessary, he stressed.

In fact, it will be necessary to hold the referendum not earlier than in a year, added Ponomaryov.

The co-chairman criticized appeals of some parliamentary factions and deputies to "take power in their hands and rule the country". "Clear division of powers is necessary and the 8th Congress of Russian People's Deputies must finally put an end to this issue," he stressed.

Ponomaryov expressed the assurance the most acceptable form of rule in Russia, with due account of current realities, would be a presidential republic.

Russian Unity Bloc on Referendum

LD0903184193 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1812 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Yuriy Vdovin]

[Text] Moscow March 9 TASS—Both the opposition and the president advocate referendum holding and are determined to fight at the upcoming 8th Congress of People's Deputies, a news conference of the Russian Unity opposition parliamentary bloc was told here today.

Bloc members said "there is an absurd situation, when both the president and the opposition stand for the referendum, but the opposition needs it to 'defeat Yeltsin'."

Deputy Mikhail Astafyev said a general meeting of deputies- Russian Unity members was held today to elaborate tactics and tasks of the opposition during the extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies. "Our main task will be the fight for cancellation of the constitutional agreement adopted by the 7th Congress," he noted.

Sergey Baburin told correspondents he is satisfied with today's roundtable meeting of political parties and movements. "I have made sure we are ready to jointly fight against anti-constitutional policy of this government." He also voiced the opinion "there is no constitutional crisis in the country, it is the political crisis."

Article on Opposition's Tasks

PM1003115593 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 10 Mar 93 p 1

[Article by Gennadiy Zyuganov, chairman of Russian Federation Communist Party Central Executive Committee: "Responsibility to People"]

[Text] An analysis of the situation which has taken shape in the country since the Seventh Congress of People's Deputies attests that there is no constitutional crisis in Russia. What there is is a very severe economic crisis, which has gotten close to the point of no return, and the total collapse of the policy of Gaydar's "reforms." There is the tremendous desire of the president and the government to divert attention from this, to portray the economic crisis as a crisis of the state system, and to draw society into a new spiral of political games and into referenda and constituent assemblies [uchredilki], in the course of which the country will collapse once and for all.

But when B. Yeltsin declares that his hands are tied, this is a lie and hypocrisy. In fact, neither the legislature nor the judiciary have yet played their parts as "checks" and "balances" with regard to the executive, they are not exercising effective control over it, and they have done virtually nothing to halt the slide toward disaster. Instead of using the power given them by the constitution, they have let themselves be lured onto the flawed path of circumventing the constitution by means of illegal "constitutional agreements."

As a result, three precious months have been lost. The decree "On Stabilizing the Constitutional System," adopted by the Congress 12 December last year, has actually proved to be a destabilizing factor, and we now have to think feverishly about how to avoid the consequences of rash decisions.

Meanwhile, the situation in the economy has been still further exacerbated. Industrial enterprises have sufficient stocks only for two or three months of work. Capital investments are being rapidly cut back, particularly in the agro-industrial complex, where the drop stands at 60 percent. Money emission no longer helps, and the growth in prices is depriving producers of all incentives to work, prompting only speculation and the squandering of fixed capital. A severe energy crisis is approaching, and extraction of energy sources is plummeting. If this trend persists, by the summer the metallurgical and chemical complexes will collapse, taking other sectors with them and creating mass unemployment. This year $20 billion of the foreign debt has to be repaid, of which we will be able to scrape together no more than $4-5 billion. At the same time the daily leaking abroad of resources and material assets from Russia amounts to approximately $1 billion.

It is under these conditions that the Eighth, Extraordinary Congress of Russian Federation People's Deputies is meeting today. If it is once again subjected to presidential blackmail, if it again gets bogged down in factional contradictions in the face of nationwide disaster, if it gets carried away with political games, it will bury itself. Then early new elections of the corps of deputies, even though they will be a heavy burden on the country, will still be a lesser evil than the inaction of the present makeup of the Congress.

What prevents people from being guided in their actions by the common interests of the state and the people? Ephemeral hopes of extracting from the crisis and the chaos some narrow factional or narrow regional advantage by means of clever maneuvers. To be more specific, there are two problems here.

First problem. Relations between the two main parliamentary blocs—"Russian Unity" and "Civic Union." During the previous congress they formed a spontaneous coalition on a number of issues, which enabled them to secure changes for the better, albeit small ones. But then the president succeeded in enticing "Civic Union" with false promises which he had no intention of fulfilling. You only have to recall Deputy N. Travkin's exultation 12 December, at the moment "compromise" was reached, and his disappointment 14 December, when the president did not even include "Civic Union's" candidate for the premiership on his list of preferences. Today the same story is literally repeating itself, and there can be no doubt that the finale will be the same. But will the centrist section of deputies be able to draw lessons?

Second problem. Relations between the center and the components of the federation, particularly the republics within Russia. Clinging to power, the president promises all kinds of broadening of the regions' rights and powers, while essentially spurring on the breakup of the federation. If the tragic fate of the USSR teaches anything, it must be realized that no one will save himself on his own. A new "parade of sovereignties" will destroy Russia.

Communists believe that both problems are soluble given political responsibility and will. A broad coalition of opposition and centrist forces is possible, as is accord between the republics and the other components of the federation to adopt urgent decisions at the congress and thereafter implement them.

It is, above all, necessary to repeal the decree "On Stabilizing the Constitutional System" and to cancel the referendum resulting from it. It is not that the opposition supposedly fears the referendum but that it is inappropriate to hold it just at this moment, for it threatens to ruin the country. It is not for nothing that 53 components of the federation advocate canceling it.

It is inadmissible to conclude any new "constitutional agreements" not provided for in the constitution. Relations among the various branches of power must continue to be changed exclusively by means of making amendments to the existing constitution.

The basic political conditions for overcoming the economic crisis have to be determined. If the government lacks any rights or powers for this, then this question must be examined in a specific, businesslike key. No one can be satisfied anymore with general moaning about the fact that the executors' "hands are tied." If additional powers are to be given, they must be exclusively: 1, for a strictly defined period of no more than three to six months; 2, for a strictly defined program of measures approved by the congress; 3, on condition that Gaydar's incorrigible supporters leave the government and that the government team is formed with the consent of the congress and the Supreme Soviet; 4, on condition that the government is accountable to parliament and takes an oath of loyalty to the people and the constitution. Only then will the delegating of some of the legislature's prerogatives to the government make any sense and not turn out another "pig in a poke."

In the opinion of Communists, reflected in the Program Statement of the Second Russian Federation Communist Party Congress, the priority anticrisis measures must be very strict state control over all foreign currency operations on the domestic market and over the activities of commercial banks, the restoration of the state monopoly on foreign trade in respect of a whole number of very important areas, the auditing of enterprises with joint capital, a limit on the percentage of profits sent abroad, etc.

Next, having outlined in this way the limits of the economic organism, it is necessary to take inventory it in the greates possible detail and to ascertain what the country actually possesses, how much has been looted, which channels for the leaking away of national wealth have not yet been closed, etc. On the basis of these calculations emergency measures of a compulsory-state nature have to be taken to assist key sectors of industry, the countryside, the social sphere, and science. But to attempt to do this without going through the previous stage would mean topping up mafia capital.

Only after this is it possible to embark on the actual reshaping of the economy, combining planning levers and market levers and acting cautiously and in stages. Only a coalition government of national salvation, consisting of pragmatists and professionals, can implement all this.

The other tasks of the opposition forces at the congress include seeking by-elections of Supreme Soviet deputy chairmen and Constitutional Court judges, so that their composition reflects the actual correlation of forces in parliament and society. Of course, the problem of setting up in radio and television a monitoring council consisting of representatives of all trends and eliminating the monopolies of right-wing radicals over the state mass media remains a burning problem.

The situation is complex and could be complicated still further by any provocations at all. It remains to be hoped that the congress will display proper vigilance and endurance and will be imbued with consciousness of its very great responsibility to the people.

Roundtable of Political Blocs Begins in Moscow 9 Mar

LD0903144593 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1100 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] Only early general elections will solve the crisis of power in Russia, Viktor Aksyuchits, a people's deputy of the Russian Federation and chairman of the Russian Christian Democratic Movement, believes. A nationwide roundtable in which representatives of the political blocs—the Civic Union, the Democratic Choice, and New Russia—are participating, has started its work in Moscow. The aim of the measure is to work out mutually acceptable positions and to achieve accord on the main political issues on the eve of the extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies.

Appeals to Yeltsin, Congress

LD0903151793 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1443 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Lyudmila Aleksandrova]

[Text] Moscow March 9 TASS—A roundtable meeting of major Russian political associations held here today discussed organizational-practical issues and approved "an appeal of the political associations' roundtable meeting to the Congress of Russian People's Deputies and the president".

The meeting, organized by four Russian political leaders of the Civic Union, New Russia, Democratic Choice and Russian Unity, as well as several trade unions and parties, has attracted Russian Communist Party leader Gennadiy Zyuganov, representative of the Democratic Russia Radical Wing Vladimir Boxer, Popular Party leader Telman Gdlyan, Co-Chairman of the All-Russian Renovation Union Aleksandr Vladislavlev, head of the Economic Freedom Party Konstantin Borovoy and leader of the Russian People's Union Sergey Baburin.

The very fact of participation of irreconcilable opponents in the meeting testified to Russian society's concern over the political crisis and desire to lower political tension.

The appeal to the congress and president calls, "despite considerable outlook differences of meeting participants," for showing "maximum responsibility and equanimity and abstaining from any actions that violate the constitution" on the congress' eve under conditions of mounting political and social tension.

The meeting considered it inadmissible to involve in politics Army and security services or create parallel

structures of the sort, and stressed the need for preventing the threat of dictatorship and ensuring human rights.

The president and people's deputies must provide for power capability with joint efforts, basing on the principle of free expression of people's will, says the appeal.

It was decided to make such meetings regular and increase the number of participants.

Yeltsin Opens Meeting of Administrative Heads 9 Mar

LD0903142993 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1325 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Aleksandr Krasulin and Gennadiy Talalayev]

[Text] Moscow, 9 Mar—"Extremely difficult economic reforms have been underway in the country for over a year. In these circumstances any confrontation could have the most ruinous consequences." Russian President Boris Yeltsin said this today when opening a meeting in the Kremlin with the heads of administration of krays and oblasts, as well as local representatives of the president.

"Conflicts only benefit those who subscribe to the principle that 'if things get worse, so much the better'. Consolidation of all reformist forces, all those who are committed to Russia's real revival, is especially necessary now," he said. "Unfortunately, our progress is being hampered by the constitutional crisis and the lack of a clear-cut division of powers between federal and local authorities. This congress must resolve the problem or, at any rate, start to resolve."

"It has been repeatedly said," the president continued, "that it is only on the basis of consensus, on the basis of respect for the Constitution that the way out of the crisis should be found. But the constitution must be respected by all parties. We can't keep making endless amendments which destroy its fundamental principles. They jeopardize the very existence of Russian statehood and the integrity of Russia. The crisis can be resolved with the help of the referendum." The president announced the wording of the questions put forward for the referendum. "However, there is another way," Boris Yeltsin pointed out. "This is the achievement of consensus between the executive and the legislative powers." He recalled that at the Seventh Congress a relevant resolution containing eight clauses was adopted at the suggestion of the Conciliation Commission. But it was pointed out at the same time, that "this agreement is valid only as a package—each individual clause cannot be valid separately."

He went on to say that he and the parliamentary speaker have reached an accord on exchanging drafts of a constitutional agreement and on the creation of working groups representing the president and the chairman of the Supreme Soviet in order to formulate a mutually acceptable document. "The presidential side has fully fulfilled its obligations," said Boris Yeltsin. "The following day our document was officially submitted to the Supreme Soviet. No reciprocal movement was observed. The Supreme Soviet has still not submitted its draft. The work could have been completed before the congress, but hardly anything has been done."

"However," the president continued, "despite such sad initial results, I still hope that an accord can be reached. We are open to all proposals and are not focused on any single one. I also have various proposal in my own reserve, including a special law that could initially be called the law on power. An all-Russia roundtable could also help to find accord."

Boris Yeltsin then said that the statement of the Council of the Heads of the Republics on the All-Russian referendum was adopted this afternoon. "The heads of republics propose that you join this statement and regard it as a joint one," he said. The president also said he will consider it necessary to make the following addition at the end of the document: "For the period until a new constitution of the Russian Federation comes into effect, no alterations should be made in the present Constitution that will disrupt the balance between the the legislature and the executive as it stood at the time of the Seventh Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation, and the consensus found at that congress."

In the president's view, "the congress will be hard." In this connection he called on the heads of administrations and on the president's representatives to conduct active work with deputies from their respective krays, oblasts, towns, and cities, in order to achieve consensus, "because people are already tired of watching all this."

Republics Want Referendum Moratorium

OW0903150493 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1452 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] On Tuesday [9 March], the heads of the Russian Federation's republics proposed banning referenda in Russia for the next two years.

The Tuesday session of the Council of the Heads of Republics was chaired by Boris Yeltsin and attended by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, Vice-Premier Sergey Shakray, Chairman of the Constitutional Court Valeriy Zorkin and the parliament's First Vice-Chairman Nikolay Ryabov. Representatives from Chechnya were not present.

Boris Yeltsin told Interfax after the conference that he was pleased with the results of the meeting. He said that all problems figuring in the agenda had been discussed and that the documents had been approved practically without disagreements by all of the parties concerned.

The president's Press Secretary Vyacheslav Kostikov informed journalists that during the congress, the leaders of the republics

would try to shift the accent from the conflict between the legislative and executive branches to the implementation of the Federation Treaty. In view of this, they proposed adopting a law on the implementation of the Federation Treaty. The current crisis of power in Russia was largely caused by the absence of a mechanism to implement the Federation Treaty, they said.

To quote Vyacheslav Kostikov, in principle, the president supports the idea of adopting a law on the implementation of the Federation Treaty. He thinks, however, that the drafting of such a law will take a lot of time and that the main emphasis should be laid on restoring the balance between the executive and legislative branches.

Kostikov also said that Boris Yeltsin wanted to know republican leaders' attitudes to the idea of a power-sharing (constitutional) agreement. Given the possibility of putting a ban on the referendum, Council members backed the idea of adopting such a document, he said. Kostikov also noted that the president did not consider his draft agreement to be an ultimatum or something immune to criticism, and that he was ready to amend it with due account taken of the recommendations of the heads of the republics and of the congress. Yeltsin will be ready to give up the idea of the referendum, if the congress accepts the constitutional agreement as an instrument of resolving the power crisis. If the congress does not do so, the president will insist on the referendum, he said.

Asked whether the president will address the congress on the first day, Kostikov said that before doing so Yeltsin would try to discover deputies' moods. He also expressed the opinion that the forthcoming congress may be quieter than the previous one and that "the president's voice will be heard."

Chairman of the North Ossetian parliament, Akhsarbek Galazov, who took part in the conference, told Interfax that in the opinion of the heads of the republics, the conflict in the center should be settled before it spreads to the regions. The situation outside the capital is under control, he said, but if the mess in the center spreads to the republics, Russia will cease to exist as an integral state.

Appeal Circulated

LD0903180493 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1725 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] Moscow March 9 TASS—An appeal of heads of republican, territorial, regional, autonomous formations, Moscow and St. Petersburg councils to the president, people's deputies and the Russian Constitutional Court was circulated here today by the Russian Supreme Soviet press center.

The resolution of the 7th People's Deputies Congress on holding the April Russian referendum on fundamental provisions of the Russian constitution, adopted on the initiative of the president, deputies and the court, has not gained a broad support of citizens, says the appeal.

Even if the referendum is held, the negative experience of the Soviet referendum of March 17, 1991, gives grounds to say April referendum results may have the most pitiful impact on Russian fate, they noted.

In this connection, the appeal authors offered the president, deputies and the court to show civic courage and put forward a joint initiative to cancel the referendum on fundamental provisions of the Russian constitution, as well as to abstain from putting forward or considering any unconstitutional initiatives on changing the current balance of the executive and legislative powers, no matter who submits them.

Authorities Said Breaching Constitution

LD0903180593 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1732 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS parliamentary correspondent Ivan Novikov]

[Text] Moscow March 9 TASS—The constitutional crisis is not in the confrontation between the two branches of government but in the failure by both of them to honour the constitution now in force, believe leaders of soviets of all levels who met journalists in parliament today.

At the press conference they made public their appeal to the president, people's deputies and constitutional court. It points out that the initiative by the seventh Congress of People's Deputies for holding a referendum on the basic provisions of the new Russian constitution "failed to win citizens' support." In this regard, heads of the soviets call for "displaying civic courage and coming up with the initiative for calling off the referendum".

Another appeal adopted by them—to the emergency congress—emphasises that the president and Supreme Soviet "should find ways to normalise the socio-political and socio-economic situation and ensure conditions to reform society on democratic principles and in the interests of man."

Representatives from provinces raise the issue of top officials' constitutional responsibility for violating the state's fundamental law. They propose that "attempts to solve the existing problems by unconstitutional power methods be denounced" and warn that if such methods are resorted to, the subjects of the federation "will use all lawful means to head off any attempts to violate the constitution by whomever they are made."

Heads of Republics Comment

PM1003113393 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 10 Mar 93 First Edition p 1

[Vasiliy Kononenko report: "The President Is Prepared To Reject Referendum if the Congress Adopts the Constitutional Agreement"]

[Excerpt] A session of the Council of Heads of Republics within the Russian Federation took place 9 March in the

"President Hotel" in Moscow. On the eve of the opening of the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies this event assumes unusual significance, especially as in February the Council of Heads of Republics failed to show support for the idea of holding a referendum.

On this occasion too the mood among its participants is much the same, if not more resolute. Thus, on the eve of the session, M. Nikolayev, president of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), declared in an interview for IZVESTIYA's correspondent: "In my view the constitutional crisis only exists in Moscow. We are not aware of it in the localities. That is why a referendum is unnecessary in the given situation. We are prepared to issue a statement stipulating a mechanism for implementing the Federation Treaty. The Supreme Soviet should adopt a special law on this score—we are proposing a draft for just such a law."

The heads of the republics of Tatarstan and Dagestan spoke in a similar spirit also. M. Shaymiyev, in particular, stressed: "I categorically oppose a referendum. The Council of Heads of Republics should adopt a decision which will wake the Moscow authorities up." He suggested declaring a moratorium on political squabbling. [passage omitted]

Groups Criticize Yeltsin, To Seek Ouster

Deputy Wants Impeachment

PM0903152793 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 6 Mar 93 p 2

[Interview with People's Deputy Tatyana Koryagina by Nadezhda Garifullina under the "Holiday Dialogues" general heading: "Will It Be the Woman Who Saves Russia?"]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] [Garifullina] Tatyana Ivanovna, we are chatting on the eve of 8 March. With which thoughts, and with which feelings are you, Russian People's Deputy Tatyana Koryagina, greeting this day?

[Koryagina] I, of course, subscribe to the congratulations directed at women on this day: A holiday is a holiday. I think that the more difficult it becomes to live—and we have not yet seen the worst of it—the more diligently we must avoid despair. I am glad that, despite the terrifying state of affairs—terrifying in relation to what was—I often see smiles and hear jokes from the lips of women.

[Garifullina] Unfortunately, the forecasts you have made over the course of two years have come true. But you say that even harder times await us. On what do you base this current forecast?

[Koryagina] I proceed from a simple analysis of socio-economic and political processes, and first and foremost the purely economic processes. The doctrine which Yeltsin backed was founded on the "500 Days" Program, the basis of which was the destruction of the national economy, the violation of social uniformity, and the dramatic polarization of the population. There can be no rays of hope on this road.

But my vision of the future is not totally colored in gloomy shades: Soon—in 1994-95, I think—there will be a drastic departure, felt by all, from the negative trend, and the transition to a rising, positive trajectory of development will begin.

[Garifullina] Are you thinking of the positive changes which President Yeltsin promises us year after year?

[Tatyana] No, Yeltsin is directly associated with the most mournful page in our history. And while he continues to be at the head of the state, the demise, unfortunately, will continue. But this political figure is living out the last, very brief period of an historical era.

Yeltsin could be ousted from the political arena not only by the opposition, which professes by way of an alternative another policy, and another—national-state—idea for Russia. His removal may be carried out by his former allies who, having switched camps, now expound the pseudo-ideology of a patriotic movement. In actual fact, they will strengthen the authority of those forces who have also been the true masters of the very same Yeltsin. And as they are camouflaged very hypocritically and cleverly, the likelihood of their wresting authority from Yeltsin is quite strong. Of course, it will all become clear in March or April. In the final analysis, Russia will not surrender to these forces.

[Garifullina] Which forces?

[Koryagina] The "Civic Union." I do not particularly believe in the sincerity of this union's maneuvers and leaders. I still have a persistent sense of the danger of this political force, although there are many good people in it. I think that there will simply be a change of scenery in order to conceal the dangerous policy of disintegration and collapse initiated under Gorbachev. This is a crafty maneuver to win time, and to push their own figures to center-stage. But they will be found among the very same Trojan horses which, in actual fact, are implementing not our own independent, domestic, Russian position, but the position of the West, disguised as political exigency [moment].

[Garifullina] But nevertheless, to what ends did Yeltsin enter into alliance with "Civic Union"?

[Koryagina] Right now, Yelstin needs the image of the peacemaker, the man of compromise. In order to remain at the helm of that very same camouflaged doctrine, it was necessary to create the structure with which he will pursue peace [poyti na mir]. This structure was prepared even before the Seventh Congress. Did you see how much air-time the "Civic Union" was given? That is, the structure includes the people who control television, and we know who they are.

My forecast: These people will not, in fact, be victorious, and as for "Civic Union"—it is Yeltsin's final political resort. In future he will be forced to seek compromise

with the real opposition—the democratic press describes it as uncompromising. Here Yeltsin's chances are small, and I agree with Western political experts who, like me, suggest that this congress will prove decisive.

[Garifullina] What is your forecast for the upcoming congress?

[Koryagina] I hope that the courage shown by my deputy colleagues at the Seventh Congress will finally assume a material form, that we will vote to impeach both the president, and the congress as the representative authority, and that we will adopt a decision on holding early elections.

On the road to power, it was not only Yeltsin, that great demagogue—even greater than Mikhail Gorbachev because he is a populist demagogue—who lied. Many deputies lied. Some lied deliberately, and sheltered under the guise of people interested in improving the life of the common man, and many lied from a simple lack of comprehension. But now we are all on show.

It will be difficult for many of us, today's incumbent deputies, to stand at repeat elections. For others, it will simply be almost impossible to explain why they were prepared to trade in our territory—the Kuril Islands—and why, overcome with hatred for Ryzhkov's government, they used to cry out then against the people's poverty but now remain silent, fearing to tell even 10 percent of that terrible truth which has been discovered.

Yeltsin failed in his time to explain to the people how, in material terms, first the ideas of Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, and then his antipeople, antihuman reform program, would be implemented—so let him have it out with the people now, at new elections. And the deputies too. The will of the people will resolve all. And I think that the people will not be mistaken this time. [passage omitted]

[Garifullina] But Boris Nikolayevich also says that he wants to revive Russia's greatness. And many of his comrades-in-arms—Starovoytova, for instance, and Burbulis, and Gaydar himself—all swear by Russia.

[Koryagina] It is possible to pronounce the words "for great Russia" and then, through one's economic policy, destroy it, Russia. And to bring a Trojan horse into the country.

Each of us must now be judged by our actions. Least of all should we believe the words of the president. Everything Yeltsin has ever promised has failed to materialize, or is materializing back to front. [passage omitted]

NSF Leader Says Dismissal Certain

PM0903170993 Rome LA REPUBBLICA in Italian 7-8 Mar 93 p 15

[Interview with Ilya Konstantinov, Russian National Salvation Front leader, by Enrico Franceschini in Moscow on 6 March]

[Excerpt] Moscow—[passage omitted] [Franceschini] Why has the Supreme Soviet put Yeltsin's impeachment on the Congress' agenda?

[Konstantinov] Because it could no longer ignore the countless violations of the constitution committed by the president in just over a year and a half in power. It is a sort of "sickness" which causes him to disregard the law. And now the moment has come to judge him.

[Franceschini] The USSR parliament also tried to remove Gorbachev from office on several occasions. But Gorbachev had been elected president by the parliament. Yeltsin was elected by the people. Do you realize the consequences which his dismissal would have?

[Konstantinov] Before talking of consequences, it should be remembered that this is not the first time this issue has been examined by the deputies. The dismissal procedure, to a certain extent, began back at the last congress in December, when we reduced the president's powers. Now it is a question of completing the job.

[Franceschini] Will you succeed?

[Konstantinov] We, as the National Salvation Front, will adopt as rigid a position as possible. But at the same time we are realists.

Despite the huge number of unconstitutional measures adopted by Yeltsin, the deputies are afraid of increasing the country's instability, and they will do everything in their power to reach a compromise.

[Franceschini] How?

[Konstantinov] By leaving Yeltsin in the presidency for a little longer, but canceling the 11 April referendum which he wanted to use to get absolute power. In short, perhaps Yeltsin will not fall at this congress, but he will count for increasingly little. At this point his dismissal is a reality, a fait accompli. There is only one thing missing: pressure from "below." A few rallies, demonstrations, a bit of picketing, collecting a few signatures. All, of course, in compliance with the constitution. And our Front is already working to this end.

[Franceschini] Is that not rather too little to overthrow a man who became president with 60 percent of votes?

[Konstantinov] No. The truth is that Boris Yeltsin came to power riding the wave of public protest, of demonstrations. Half a million people in the streets of Moscow were enough to turn him into a national leader and to allow him to win the presidency. So he will go in the same way: He will be forced to yield his power when the same half a million people rebel against him. And it will happen soon—it is already happening—because people no longer believe in Boris Yeltsin or his policies.

[Franceschini] With what accusations are you preparing to call for his dismissal in congress?

[Konstantinov] First: He was the man principally responsible for the agreement among Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus which, in December 1991, illegally decreed the dissolution of the USSR. Second: It was he who, without the approval of parliament or of any other constitutional body, launched a radical economic reform which has brought only disaster for the Russian people, and which has brought a great power's economy to the verge of catastrophe, selling off all the nation's wealth. Third: He has abandoned 25 million Russians living outside Russia, in the territory of other former USSR republics, to their fate, Russians whom he, as president, had a duty to defend and who are treated everywhere today as second-class citizens. Fourth: He has weakened Russia by making serious mistakes in foreign policy. Fifth: He has tried to dissolve the bodies of representative power—not only the national parliament but also the regional soviets throughout Russia—in an attempt to establish the power of a single man, Boris Yeltsin, and of his apparatus. But this power will not last long. If we 1,000 members of congress do not get rid of him, the people will do it, in the streets, and in the ballot boxes, at the next elections. At this point, Boris Yeltsin's political career is finished.

Unity Faction To Raise Issue

OW0903165893 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1642 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Members of the Russian Unity faction plan to raise the issue of the president's impeachment on Wednesday [10 March], the first working day of the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies.

The decision to do so was reached at an assembly of members of the faction which was held Tuesday in the Kremlin.

Russian Unity Bloc's Proposal

LD1003091893 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0823 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Text] Moscow March 10 TASS—The influential and large parliamentary bloc Russian Unity is going to bring up the question at the congress about the impeachment of President Yeltsin, Sergey Baburin, one of the leaders of the bloc, told ITAR-TASS today before the opening of the congress. His supporters are accusing the president of "repeated violation of the constitution."

If representatives of the irreconcilable opposition manage to include the impeachment item in the agenda of the congress, they will try to enlist the support of two thirds of people's deputies (1,033 people), so that the problem will be settled in their favour.

If the situation develops in this way, the congress will assign the constitutional court whether or not the president violated the Constitution and will pass its judgement, with which the Congress of People's Deputies will have to agree.

Nationalists Threaten Military Action

OW1003143893 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1415 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The chairman of the executive committee of the Russian National Assembly, Aleksandr Sterligov, a former KGB general, said the assembly demanded the dismissal of the president and government, and early elections. He was speaking at a meeting of opposition organizations in Moscow on Wednesday [10 March]. Sterligov said the peoples of Russia, above all the Russian people, should mobilize all their forces to protect the Constitution and prevent the President from imposing his dictatorship.

Participants of the meeting were issued copies of a statement of the coordinating council of the Russian National Movement, which encompasses the Russian National Assembly and other nationalist organizations. The council demands that the current Eighth Congress of People's Deputies dismiss the president and government, form a coalition government on which various nationalities of Russia would be represented proportionally to their size, abolish the presidential government system, and put the Prime Minister in charge of the executive branch. "If the people's deputies again give support to the unpopular and anti-Russian policy of the President and government, the Coordinating Council of the Russian National Movement will reserve for itself the right to form a Russian front and call on the Russian people to fight for the salvation of Russia," the statement reads.

"A government enjoying the trust of the nation would be formed within 24 hours," Sterligov told INTERFAX. "If Yeltsin resorts to dictatorship, that is, if he imposes presidential rule and disbands the congress, the Russian National Assembly will form a Russian front, that is it will take various kinds of steps, including military ones," Sterligov said.

Yeltsin's Adherence to Constitution Questioned

OW1003142993 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1415 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] On Wednesday, the 8th Congress of People's Deputies turned down the proposal by Mikhail Astafyev, the leader of the Constitutional Democratic Party, on checking Boris Yeltsin's recent statement for compliance with the constitution.

Astafyev suggested among other things that the Constitutional Court check on the president's statement to the effect that he did not swear allegiance to the constitution in its current shape.

Astafyev's proposal was supported by 418 deputies; 341 voted against it and 45 abstained from voting.

To quote Astafyev, the qualification of Yeltsin's statement as anti-constitutional might become the first move towards his impeachment.

Congress Not To Impeach Yeltsin

OW1003143293 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1416 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The 8th Congress of People's Deputies will not decide to impeach the president, says leader of the Russian Unity opposition alliance Vladimir Isakov. Such a decision would complicate the political situation even further, he added.

He also announced that the opposition was in favor of annulling last year's resolution on the stabilization of the constitutional system, envisaging a referendum. "It has become clear now that the resolution was a mistake," he said. He also believes that the deputies will not adopt any new document, say an agreement or law on powers which would replace the constitution.

Petr Filippov, a leader of the democratic-minded deputies, thinks that after the congress, the status quo between the executive and legislative branches will be sustained. The congress will not adopt any constitutional agreement between the executive and legislative branches, he said. If the deputies cancel the referendum, it may still be held in the form of a national opinion poll, which will bring political dividends to the president, said Filippov.

Government Meets Before Opening of Congress 10 Mar

LD1003082493 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0720 GMT 10 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Ivan Ivanov]

[Text] Moscow March 10 TASS—A brief meeting of the Russian Government was held in the Kremlin today morning before the opening of the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation. It was chaired by Vice-Premier Vladimir Shumeyko, ITAR-TASS has learned from a well-informed source within the apparatus of the Russian Council of Ministers.

In the course of this 20-minute meeting Shumeyko informed government members about the proposals to the agenda of the congress. The meeting also discussed the work of the government during the Congress of People's Deputies and the preliminary documents that will be handed out to the MPs.

It was decided "to work in contact with the deputies", to explain the government's stand on the discussed problems, its efforts to implement the economic reforms. The government members were told that Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin would ask the congress to give him the floor. His speech is expected to deal with the principal directions of the cabinet's work.

According to the same source, the government is expected to hold another meeting at 1830 to sum up today's work of the congress.

No Question of Resignation

OW1003114793 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1109 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] On Wednesday morning, shortly before the opening of the Eighth Extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies, the Cabinet held a conference which was chaired by First Vice-Premier Vladimir Shumeyko. Vice-Premier Yuriy Yarov told INTERFAX that the government had specified its moves during the congress. "The Cabinet members unanimously believe that every effort should be made to overcome the crisis," he said.

He also noted that the possibility of the Cabinet's resignation, discussed during the previous congress, was out of the question now. "We haven't come just to leave. We are not guaranteed against mistakes, but we are ready to carry our burden worthily, and not to shake it off when it becomes too heavy," he said.

According to INTERFAX sources, during the congress, the government will meet two times a day, at 9:00 [0600 GMT] and 19:00 [1600 GMT], or later, depending on the time the congress finishes its daily debates.

Eighth Congress of People's Deputies Opens 10 Mar

LD1003081993 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0734 GMT 10 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Aleksandr Chernov]

[Text] Moscow March 10 TASS—The eighth extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation opens here today.

It goes without saying that the main item of its agenda is the holding of an all-Russia referendum on April 11. This problem was in the focus, to this or that extent, of the Russian Supreme Soviet's work during the days preceding the forum. However, the passions came to a head on March 9, when both the supporters and opponents of the referendum landed in obvious time trouble.

President Yeltsin has said that the super-task was to hold the congress "in a peaceful atmosphere, without any fight", to have the two branches of power act concertedly, but separately. He bluntly denied rumours about his allegedly plans to disband the congress.

The Russian Supreme Soviet has not approved the questions to the referendum, which were proposed by the president. It merely took note of them and moved to decide everything at the congress.

Explaining the stand of the presidential side during a recent press conference here, Vice-Premier Vladimir Shumeyko stated bluntly that if the congress repealed its decision to hold a referendum, a nation-wide poll would have to be held.

Be what it may, both sides were able to speak out and to clarify their stands to some extent. This gives ground for hope, even though small, that the congress debate will be constructive.

Shakhray Presents Yeltsin's Proposed Congress Agenda

LD1003094193 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 0751 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Speech by First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Mikhailovich Shakhray at the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies held in the Kremlin in Moscow—live]

[Text] Esteemed Chairman, esteemed people's deputies. At the instruction of the president of the Russian Federation, here are the arguments for his proposed agenda.

The president proposes to leave just one question on the agenda: On the interaction of authorities to overcome the crisis and on ways to achieve consensus. Within the framework of this question the problems of the referendum will inevitably be discussed, and a decision adopted.

As far as the second question proposed by the Supreme Soviet is concerned, I would like to draw the esteemed people's deputies' attentions to the following. After the Constitution was adopted in its present form, amendments to it were introduced. The principle of the division of authorities was introduced into articles 1 to 3. The Russian Federation Constitutional Court was formed by this corps of deputies, and now its exclusive prerogative is the consideration of the constitutionality of actions by officials and the constitutionality of enforceable enactments.

On the basis of this, I wish to draw your attention to this rule: One cannot be the judge of one's own actions. Therefore, the Constitutional Court is to act as the arbiter on the rulings and regulations of both the Supreme Soviet and the Congress.

And finally, to remove this item, the second item as proposed by the Supreme Soviet, because it will not stop the arguments. The sides will unfortunately find imperfections in the text of the Constitution and will find something of which to accuse each other, of dozens and hundreds of violations of the Constitution. Neither the Congress nor the people of the Russian Federation need that right now. And the chairman of the Supreme Soviet said this quite clearly as he ended his introductory speech: The Congress should concentrate on accord.

If the president's proposals are accepted, the Congress could set up a commission to work out a coordinated draft for a resolution. This could be completed today.

Finally, procedural violations. The Supreme Soviet's proposal was adopted as a basis. It would be a little clumsy to exclude any issue from a basis or from an agenda that has yet to be adopted. So the proposal is this: To restrict ourselves to one question, draft and word it in a positive way in cooperation with the authorities in order to overcome the crisis, and find ways of achieving an accord. Thank you.

Comments on Proposal

LD1003102993 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 0849 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Address by Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Shakhray to the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies in the Kremlin in Moscow—live]

[Excerpts] [Khasbulatov] Sergey Mikhailovich Shakhray, go ahead. Microphone one, go ahead.

[Shakhray] Esteemed chairman, esteemed People's Deputies. I wish to draw your attention to the following. A proposal from the President regarding the agenda was submitted in writing to the Presidium of the Congress. This proposal consists of two parts. The first is a wording for the first item on the Congress agenda, intended to achieve accord. The second part proposes removing the second item from the agenda as proposed by the Supreme Soviet. The President's proposal is one single document. However, in contravention of the Constitution and of procedure it, the President's proposal in writing, was not put to the vote as a single document, as one single proposal. Instead, it was submerged among oral proposals from Deputies, although

the President by virtue of his status enjoys no less right than the Supreme Soviet to submit proposals and questions to the Congress.

Because of this, I am empowered by the president to remove his proposal regarding the agenda. We are willing to work to whatever agenda the Congress proposes, and in this light I propose that the Congress' proceedings on Item Two include a report by a representative of the president on constitutional legality and on observance of the Constitution by bodies of parliament.

I would like to end, nonetheless, on a note of peace. Esteemed Deputies! Our mandates are now in their fourth year. Let us hold this eighth and emergency Congress in a constructive manner.

[Khasbulatov] Okay. [passage omitted]

[Shakhray] Esteemed Deputies! The president's proposal in writing that is with the Presidium is withdrawn, but the second proposal concerns working procedures—that there be a report on item two, on constitutional legality. I would also like to point this out: there is a way out of the situation without causing damage, in the resolution by the Seventh Congress on stabilization of the constitutional system. Let us not destroy the seeds of agreement within just three months. This resolution exists and has played its part. It exists, there is a way out of this. The Congress should not itself undo the accord that existed in December. [passage omitted]

Gorbachev Agenda Item Proposed

LD1003092193 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0829 GMT 10 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent]

[Text] Moscow March 10 TASS—Ex-President of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev has called for the inclusion in the agenda of the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies, now under way here, the question of holding pre-term elections of all the Russian authorities. Speaking on Moscow television on Tuesday evening [9 March], he expressed the view that current public debates on the referendum, constituent assembly and constituent agreement "divert people from the crux of the matter". "We are being diverted from the main problem by these noisy debates and rallies, by the mass media," Gorbachev stressed. In the ex- president's opinion, "the policy pursued since January 1991 has proved unsuccessful". In light of this, he believes Russia now needs elections. They may "produce a new combination of political forces, capable of shaping" another policy. Gorbachev believes that the regions and the centre have already "promoted many new, fresh forces. Their talents and capabilities have not been tapped and they have not been enlisted in the political process".

The ex-president said that the members of the state of emergency committee should be put on trial. "I intend to take part in the hearings as one of the main witnesses," he stressed. He said that those people should not be "described as heroes", because they were all aware of the political and economic reform programmes, which were then being drawn up by the USSR Cabinet of Ministers, but "toppled everything a month later".

No less sensational was Gorbachev's statement that "the state security had tapped" the talk he had with Boris Yeltsin and Nursultan Nazarbayev in Novo-Ogaryovo on August 2 or 3, 1991. The three had discussed plans for the period following the signing of the federal treaty, in particular, the question of new presidential elections and the formation of new federal bodies.

Speaking about his plans, the ex-president said that he intended to hold meetings shortly at the "Gorbachev Foundation" with leaders of several regions of Russia, particularly the far east.

Congress Rejects Yeltsin Proposal

LD1003111293 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1000 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Text] When discussing a draft agenda, the Congress of the Russian People's Deputies has declined the proposal by Russian Federation President Yeltsin to exclude the issue relating to the observance of the Russian Federation Constitution by supreme bodies of state power and officials. Yeltsin has proposed to examine one issue at the congress—on interaction between powers to overcome the crisis and on ways of achieving an accord—implying that in the course of discussing it the issue of the referendum will be examined.

Sergey Shakhray, the president's representative, stated that the reasons for Yeltsin's proposal were that the congress now needs to focus on reaching an accord and that the removal of the issue of the observance of the Constitution by supreme bodies of state power and officials from the agenda would avoid a squabble.

However, deputies did not agree with the proposal by Yeltsin. A total of 480 of the 887 deputies voted to decline the proposal, 358 voted against, and 49 abstained. This is reported by RIA.

Deputies Debate Agenda

LD1003143793 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1357 GMT 10 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS parliamentary correspondent Lyudmila Yermakova]

[Text] Moscow March 10 TASS—The extraordinary 8th Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation opened in the Great Kremlin palace here today.

"The convocation of the supreme legislative organ of our country," Chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet Ruslan Khasbulatov said in his opening speech, "is explained by the need to urgently adopt a decision on the referendum, scheduled for April 11."

The speaker described the current disturbing situation in Russia. He noted that the latent potential of the agreements, concluded between the two branches of power at the Seventh Congress, had not been tapped. "The situation is aggravated by the fact," Khasbulatov noted, "that there are no positive shifts in the national economy, which is again being sacrificed for the sake of political intrigues. However, we are prepared to seek concord for the sake of ensuring civil peace and promoting the policy of reforms," the speaker stressed. He urged the congress to display wisdom and to renounce ideological struggle.

Russia's other top leaders also declared their desire to find ways leading to civil concord. Replying to ITAR-TASS, Russian President Boris Yeltsin said before the opening of the congress that he was ready to table a couple of other proposals to achieve concord before announcing a nation-wide plebiscite".

Expounding on the president's stand, his press secretary Vyacheslav Kostikov told journalists that "the president has come to the congress to resolve the main problem—to overcome the constitutional crisis and to do it in such a way as to avoid a tough confrontation between opposite forces during the congress.

This is why President Yeltsin has moved to include in the agenda an item "On the interaction of the authorities to overcome the crisis and pave the way to concord". The president moves not to launch a debate on the number of breaches of the constitution committed over the past few years, because this will lead the congress into a difficult and unconstructive abyss of deliberations."

Many speakers, who took the floor during the discussion on the agenda of the congress, urged the MPs to find a way out of the acute political crisis by constitutional means, not to betray the expectations of their voters, who had delegated them to Moscow. However, the agenda discussion was very keen. MPs have turned down, for instance, Deputy Mikhail Astafyev's proposal to include in the agenda the item "On the congress's appeal to the constitutional court in connection with President Boris Yeltsin's public refusal to honour the constitution of the Russian Federation". A representative of the opposition "Russian Unity" bloc noted that such an appeal to the Constitutional Court would in this case be "the first step to impeach the president". However, Astafyev's motion was rejected.

Deputy Anatoliy Shabad moved not to endorse any agenda at all and to go home, because, in his opinion it is simply necessary to fulfil the decisions of the 7th Congress and not to start debating them. But his proposal was seconded by only 97 out of the almost 1,000 participants in the forum.

The agenda was approved after a 2-hour debate. The congress will discuss two problems—the decision of the 7th Congress to stabilise the constitutional system and the problem of making federal organs of state power and officials honour the constitution of the Russian Federation.

Moreover, as stated by Khasbulatov, head of the Russian Government Viktor Chernomyrdin and Chairman of the Russian Central Bank Viktor Gerashchenko were planning to address the congress.

Yeltsin Hopeful for 'Peaceful Outcome' to Congress

OW1003083793 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0820 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] President Boris Yeltsin assessed as '50/50' the chances that the congress of the RF [Russian Federation] people's deputies will achieve a constitutional agreement. He expressed this opinion answering journalists' questions Wednesday [10 March] morning in anticipation of the opening of the congress.

Asked by Interfax whether he will take the floor and address the deputies on the congress' opening day, President Yeltsin indicated that "It will depend on how the congress' agenda is made up."

"As far as I am concerned," President Yeltsin said, "I only count on a peaceful outcome, for we have no other alternative: we need to seek conciliation and achieve balance of power branches." Asked how he viewed the achievement of conciliation, the president answered, "we ought to retain maximum of the agreement which was achieved at the 7th congress."

President Yeltsin said that if the congress declined the variant of the constitutional agreement proposed by him, he has several more 'initiatives' at his disposal. In particular, the president said, if his wording of the agreement is turned down, he will propose an alternative power-sharing agreement which could be endorsed as a constitutional amendment. This document, he said, contains two and half type-written pages, and it clearly divides the spheres of competence between the power branches, so their balance could be maintained.

In touching on US President Bill Clinton's suggestion in regards to the convention of the "G7" in order to work out proposals for assisting Russia, President Yeltsin noted that "all those who sympathize with us morally and materially, are undoubtedly supporting the reform, while President Clinton, who is assisting us now politically most seriously, is supporting Russia's reform course and the Russian president."

To Have 'Final Say'

LD1003080793 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0724 GMT 10 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS parliamentary correspondents]

[Text] Moscow, 10 Mar—Russian President Boris Yeltsin has assessed the changes of reaching a compromise at the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies as "fifty-fifty." Replying to questions put by journalists

today before the opening of the forum, he reported that he is prepared "to make another couple of proposals to achieve an accord for all that before he announces a nation-wide plebiscite."

Regarding the draft law on power which has been drawn up, Yeltsin noted that "the clauses regarding the division of powers are precisely defined" in it. After calling the examination of this draft law as "one of the reserve variants," the Russian Federation president replied to a question put by the ITAR-TASS correspondent that he will have the final say "if all the other variants are exhausted."

Ready for Compromise

LD1003111493 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1053 GMT 10 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS writer Lyudmila Aleksandrova]

[Text] Moscow March 10 TASS—There is no doubt the 8th extraordinary Congress of Russian People's Deputies which opened today will be difficult for all its participants, important for the Russian history and the most unpredictable for correspondents.

Last December the 7th congress, which was the climax of struggle between the Russian legislative and executive authorities, seemed to leave the worst things behind, as the president was taught a bitter lesson and the parliament speaker was satisfied with his victory and ready for cooperation and mutual understanding. Unfortunately, further developments have shown opposition of the two power branches and their leaders increased.

What is the stand of the state head before the congress? Firstly, he has learnt lessons from the 7th congress mistakes and is getting ready for a new congress. Before the 7th congress the president consulted only his deputy advocates, who appeared to be in minority, this time he visited the centrist Civic Union forum and told PRAVDA he does not exclude cooperation with moderate communists.

"Today's Russian situation is such, it is useless to try overcome it acting alone," the president told the Ostankino TV Company on March 7. "Neither right-wing, nor left-wing, nor centrists, nor democrats will do it alone," he added.

Thus, over the past period Boris Yeltsin has become convinced of the need for cooperation of political forces. His major opponent, Ruslan Khasbulatov, seems to feel strong enough to gain support of public forces outside the parliament.

The period between the two congresses witnessed president hesitation on what line to take—either flexible or tough.

Facts show the 7th congress was a big lesson to the Russian executive power structure. "At the upcoming congress I want to achieve concord of the legislative and executive powers and the president," the president told the Itogi news program, saying he also has an "extreme variant".

What does the president plan to do, judging by his recent statements? He would prefer to hold the referendum on April 11, as the previous congress decided. He would put four questions on the referendum, namely "do you agree that the Russian Federation shall be a presidential republic?", "do you agree that the two-chamber parliament shall be the only supreme legislative body of the Russian Federation?", "do you agree that the new Russian Constitution shall be adopted by a constitutional assembly to represent the multi- national people of the Russian Federation?" and "do you agree that each citizen of the Russian Federation shall have the right to own, use and dispose of land as an owner?".

However, Boris Yeltsin does not insist on the referendum. "We are open to any proposals and do not focus on only one," the president told a meeting of territorial and regional administration on March 9 in Kremlin. "I can offer different variants, including a special law that can be called the law on power," he said.

The law on power, in the president's opinion, means the establishment of power division and proceeds from "the constitutional variant of April, 1992".

If the congress votes against the referendum, (Russian republican heads told Boris Yeltsin on March 9 they do not think the referendum is necessary), the president is ready to refuse from it, if the congress adopts a constitutional agreement, which "if not solve then make closer the settlement of the constitutional crisis".

The draft constitutional agreement timely submitted by the president to the Supreme Soviet chairman, pointed out the president "guarantees strict observation" of such obligations as "non- interference in prerogatives of the legislative power and provision of the observation by executive power bodies of the constitutional principle of power division". The president and the Supreme Soviet agree to "abstain from legislative initiatives on changing or introducing additions to the Russian Constitution, as well as adopting a new Constitution by the current composition of Russian deputies' corps".

Thus, the situation is more than ticklish on the eve of the congress. The president has understood he is in a difficult situation and is ready for a compromise. The parliament leader, unfortunately, does not show readiness for compromises, since he considers himself an evident winner. As result, Russian democracy may suffer.

In addition, the Supreme Soviet did not even approve but only took into account the information submitted by the Russian president. After a brief discussion deputies adopted a resolution saying the Supreme Soviet takes into account the information submitted by the Russian president and sends his proposals to the 8th People's Deputies Congress for consideration.

Yeltsin Spokesman on 'Confrontational Spirit'

LD1003150293 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1404 GMT 10 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS corespondent Sergey Podyapolsky]

[Text] Moscow March 10 TASS—The report on referendum presented to the Congress of People's Deputies (Russia's supreme legislative body) by Deputy Parliament Chairman Nikolay Ryabov was branded as "steeped in a tough and confrontational spirit" by Vyacheslav Kostikov, a spokesman for the Russian president, Boris Yeltsin.

Kostikov told journalists during a break in the work of the congress that the report was intended for the most conservative group of the deputy corps.

"Unfortunately the olive branch which the president brought to the congress was not taken up by anyone", Kostikov said. According to him, the first hours in the work of the congress showed that the hardliners in the presidium of the parliament have succeeded in "narrowing the field for interaction". In particular, he pointed out that the congress ignored the president's proposal of an item on the agenda from the outset.

Nevertheless, the Russian president believes that additional initiatives which he plans to voice at the congress will "bring the congress to its senses and the common sense will triumph", the spokesman said.

Vyacheslav Kostikov said that great hopes were connected with the upcoming speech of the Russian prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin. "He will not make exultant noises from the rostrum about the country heading for the abyss but will outline the actual economic situation in the country and the progress of reforms", the spokesman said.

"I hope that the premier's speech and other sober-minded voices will convince the deputies that they cannot leave this congress without having achieved anything," Kostikov said. "Otherwise the drama of disintegration of power in Russia will possibly continue", he said.

It would be best for the sides to give up their desire to defeat the other side and end the battle in a draw by defining the strict delimitation of powers of the legislative and executive branches of power.

Khasbulatov Delivers Address to Congress

LD1003093293 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 0657 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Address by Russian Supreme Soviet Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov at the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies in the Kremlin in Moscow—live]

[Text] [Khasbulatov] Esteemed President of the Russian Federation! Esteemed People's Deputies of the Russian Federation! Esteemed members of the government and guest of the Congress! The convocation of the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation is due for the need to urgently resolve the issue of a referendum on 11 April.

The demand to convene the congress was expressed in numerous appeals from people to the Supreme Soviet, republican and kray soviets, and heads of administrations, political parties and movements. The country is anxiously waiting. Three months ago we parted from you on a wave of cautious optimism. It seemed then there were sufficient grounds for that. First, we managed to avoid the threat of direct confrontation between the president and legislators. We managed to find some kind of a compromise, opening the way toward civil peace, as it seemed to us, toward the normal development of the constitutional process in the country and society.

Second, the country has acquired a head of government consistent with the Constitution, whose legitimacy caused no doubts for the first time ever.

Third, our concrete decisions on directions for the future development of the economic reform, on stepping up the fight against crime, and on bringing the army's position back to normal, backed by constitutional amendments, including presidential amendments as well, strengthened the basis for the normal functioning of a power mechanism both on federal and regional levels.

Unfortunately, we must state here with full responsibility and sincerity that it proved to be impossible to implement potential possibilities of agreements. I hope the reasons for this will be stated here. There can be no doubt about the fact that citizens of the Russian Federation, republics, oblasts, krays and other subjects of the federation, political forces and parties, scientists and lawyers are voicing serious concern with regard to our decisions on the 11 April referendum and its possible consequences.

The situation has been complicated by the fact that there is no positive shift in the economy. We still have no program for stabilizing the economy and adjusting the course of the reforms. On the contrary, ever more voices can be heard in favor of preserving the former strategy of transformations, which destroys productive forces. Hopes of light at the end of a gloomy tunnel of reforms are being crushed.

The position of an ever growing section of the population is becoming hopeless. Underlying reasons for these developments were revealed at the Sixth and Seventh Congresses of People's Deputies, where measures for getting out of the crisis were outlined, but their actual implementation is being blocked. An atmosphere of confrontation and hostility is being artificially whipped up. The economy is once again being sacrificed to political intrigues. Nevertheless, we are prepared to seek accord, in the interests of preserving civil peace and the policies of reform, within the framework of the constitution, of course, and of the constitution alone. All

anti-constitutional statements and preposterous outbursts by officials must end. It looks as if there is a certain logic behind the attempts to devaluate the present constitution, to destabilize the political situation, and to wind up to the limit the conflicts at the federal level. It lies in the presupposition that the potential for implementing ultra-radical reforms by constitutional and democratic methods has been exhausted.

Therefore, we see a drive to breathe a second life into this policy by way of looking for enemies of the reform, of artificial and cynical actions aimed at destabilizing the situation. There have even been direct attempts to involve the army, the interior ministry, and the security forces in the political process. This is obviously intolerable. I am making an urgent appeal to them to observe constitutional legality in the country. As a result, we have now once again found ourselves at a crossroads, facing a choice: either we confirm the idea of a referendum, or we seek some other way out of this acute political crisis. A way out that lies, I repeat, within the framework of the Constitution.

I believe that each one of us rules out unconstitutional ways of untangling this problem. A preliminary consideration of the issue at the Supreme Soviet has shown the extreme complexity of the situation. To solve it, the Congress will have to show wisdom, endurance, and a high degree of responsibility. In order to devise a correct solution one must proceed from an objective assessment of the situation in the country. Only if one understands the economic situation, people's social position, and the political situation in the country can one devise measures that are appropriate to society's conditions of life, and that will help to overcome the existing conflicts and, without doubt, to continue the democratic trend of change, while making significant changes to it, of course.

Nobody should deceive themselves that the citizens of the country are ignorant of the true aims of the very fierce struggle over the referendum. Thus, society will accept our decisions regarding the referendum if we are guided by the constitution, the interests of Russia and of all our fellow citizens, and if we discuss the present situation calmly and in a business-like manner. Let us not be deluded by the silence of the people, occupied in the daily struggle for survival. They are still, for the time being, putting up with our inability to act jointly, but even people's patience may run out. Colleagues, respected President, respected friends, let us renounce the ideology of struggle. Let us subordinate the Congress's work to the interests of our fellow citizens and our country, while observing constitutional legality. Thank you for your attention.

Ryabov Questions Timing of Referendum

LD1003142693 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1403 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Text] Moscow March 10 ITAR-TASS—The resolution of the Seventh Congress of People's Deputies on the stabilisation of the constitutional system was a "one-sided concession of the legislative authorities in favour of the executive authorities," Deputy Chairman of the Russian Parliament Nikolay Ryabov said today. He made a report on the first item of the agenda at the 8th congress.

Last December we regarded the resolution as a sort of a "gentlemanly agreement on the stabilisation of the constitutional system," he said. It removed tension and made it possible for the congress to continue its work. However, Ryabov continued, practical life showed that even the slightest deviations from the Constitution "do not lead to the improvement of the situation and understanding between authorities, but further aggravate the conflict between them and lead to a further destabilisation of the situation in society."

"This is why the first and the most important conclusion is that any agreements outside the framework of the existing Constitution and laws are no good. The Constitution itself is a compromise, formulated on the legislative level," Ryabov continued.

He accused the executive authorities of the attempts to get anticonstitutional prerogatives for themselves and to create state management bodies, which will not be accountable to the legislative authorities. According to Ryabov, the parliament retained at its disposal only indirect means of control through limited legislative activities, the budget and the Central Bank.

The very fact of introducing additional prerogatives shows that "the existing Constitution does not suit the forces close to the president, that they would like to remove the constitutional framework of their activities," Ryabov believes. In his opinion, this is why these forces insist on adopting a new Constitution through the referendum as soon as possible.

Ryabov said that the it would be undesirable to hold the referendum now, because the situation in the country is far from stable. The normative base of the referendum is wide open to criticism, he added. After the signing of the federal treaty the putting to a referendum of any issue, which is within joint competence in this or that degree, without the consent of signatories to the treaty may be regarded by them as the violation of the contractual character of the division of authority, Ryabov stressed. "It is very impportant to take this factor into account, when it comes to any spontaneous phrases, including those which are being put forward these days and which deal with the creation of a so-called constitutional assembly and the transition to a presidential form of government," Ryabov pointed out.

Speaking about the actions taken by the parliament and other authorities during preparations for the referendum, Ryabov said that the creation of a government commission for preparing the referendum, headed by Vladimir Shumeyko, "was nothing but the exceeding of authority by the executive bodies of power, because this is the exclusive competence of electoral commissions."

Assessing all the aspects of the resolution of the 7th congress on holding a nationwide referendum on April

11, Ryabov said that "it was not thought over well enough, or, in other words, it was a mistake. The stand assumed by members of the federation on this problem is the main proof to it."

Previously the congress yielded to the enormous pressure and agreed to the referendum, violating at the same time the procedure set by the law, but now it can and must analyse the problem once again to make the final decision, relying on the opinion of signatories to the federal treaty, Ryabov continued.

Touching upon the intention of the executive authorities to replace the April 11 referendum by a nationwide plebiscite, Ryabov said that the legislation of this country does not envisage this form of the expression of people's will.

Passing over to the proposal of the executive authorities to conclude an agreement between federal bodies of power as an alternative to the referendum, he pointed out that an agreement like that "is not envisaged by the Constitution, and its adoption would actually mean the revision of the system of state power."

At the same time, Ryabov said that one should not reject a possibility of an agreement, if a corresponding procedure is strictly observed. Such documents are made not like the documents of a constitutional level, but as ordinary working documents. They outline concerted actions within the framework of the Constitution, in accordance with laws. Joint actions may result in proposals on making corresponding amendments to the existing Constitution, but only if the procedure set by the Constitution itself is observed. If such amendments become imminent, they may be presented as a joint legislative initiative, As one's own or even alternative initiative.

A more clear division of authority along with the observance of principles of the supremacy of the law could become the main content of the constitutional amendments.

Touching upon specific items of an agreement between the two branches of authority, Ryabov said that it would be reasonable to record in them the following ideas: the parliament and the president pledge not to take steps upsetting the balance between the legislative and executive authorities, which is recorded in the existing Constitution. They reiterate their commitment to strictly observe the Constitution and find it expedient to hold pre-term parliamentary and presidential elections simultaneously no later than the spring of 1994 on the basis of new electoral laws. Until a new Constitution is adopted, laws should be drafted on the supreme legislative authority, the election of people's deputies, presidential elections, political parties and public and political movements.

Opposes Referendum, Power Agreement

OW1003143093 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1414 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Vice-Chairman of the Russian parliament, Nikolay Ryabov, urged the deputies to annul the decision on holding the referendum and expressed his opposition to the president- proposed draft agreement between the two branches of power. The resolution of the previous congress on the stabilization of the constitutional system was erroneous, he said, while 6 of the 7 provisions of that document were a direct concession to the president.

He also said that the current constitution does not suit the president and his supporters who are campaigning for the adoption of a new constitution through a special assembly, i.e. in an anti-constitutional way. The referendum serves the same purpose, he added.

Ryabov emphasized that the politician insisting on the referendum must be aware of the entire responsibility for its results. He also said that in an expert estimate, the referendum will involve just about 48% of the citizens. Moreover, only 14% of those polled supported the idea of the referendum. He criticized the proposal on holding a national opinion poll as an alternative to the referendum. Such a poll is not envisaged by law, he said.

Speaking about the president-proposed draft agreement between the two branches of power, Ryabov said that such a document will remove the Congress of People's Deputies from the political scene. He also pointed out that the conclusion of any agreements outside the context of the constitution would be extremely counterproductive. The president-proposed draft agreement pursues one goal - to make the executive branch unaccountable to the parliament.

Having noted that "disagreements between the branches of power were rooted in different approaches to social development, not in the conflict between individuals, he suggested that the Constitutional Commission set up a new working group, led by the president, for implementing the legal provisions of the Federation Treaty. [no closing quotation marks as received] He admitted that Article 104 of the Constitution which deals with the powers of the Congress of People's Deputies, "formally goes against the principles of the division of powers." He noted, however, that it was early yet to change it because the congress was the sole guarantor of the constitutional system.

Mixed President-Parliament System Viewed

PM1003125593 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian
10 Mar 93 p 2

[Dzhangir Kerimov article: "The One Thing There Is No Room for Is Polyarchy]

[Text] Many people think that political leaders have only to temper their ambitious aspirations and moderate their excessive claims and they will immediately reach agreement, and the crisis will be over. Personal qualities and psychological factors are certainly of some significance in achieving consensus, but they are far from being of chief and crucial significance, for the crisis has far deeper roots. The crisis is due to the authorities' unprecedented estrangement from the people and mounting social tension.

The separation of legislative and executive powers is no doubt one of the key problems actively discussed by politicians today. Such a separation has few opponents, the argument comes down to the measure of authority each branch of power will enjoy. But this argument fails to take account of the key element—the whole point of separating powers is to achieve unity of power. However, the reality of the country has proven far more complex than the theoretical blueprints allow.

It is becoming increasingly obvious to the broad masses of the people that the struggle between legislative and executive structures, far from being waged over the separation of powers, is being waged over monopoly control of power itself. Instead of uniting these branches of power in a democratically unified state mechanism, a tug-of-war is being waged in favor of one or other structure. Given that neither branch can overcome the other, the so-called "Constitutional Agreement" has been dreamed up.

A number of questions inevitably spring to mind here: Which institution has the right to adopt this agreement? Does it enjoy constitutional status if adopted? Is the possibility of adopting a legal act in the form of the "Constitutional Agreement" envisaged by the Constitution? What is the legal force of this act? The list of such questions can be extended.

Leaving aside the fact that the hopes pinned on the "agreement" are highly questionable, it does not—from the legal standpoint—stand up to any serious criticism. First, the "Constitutional Agreement" is not envisaged by the present Russian Federation Constitution, and for that reason its conclusion will be unconstitutional. Second, if an addition is made to the Constitution on a "new form of legal act—the "Constitutional Agreement" (which is unlikely)—in accordance with established procedure, only then can it be concluded between the parties empowered by the Constitution. Third, as the "Constitutional Agreement" (if the appropriate addition to the Constitution is adopted) operates at a constitutional level, it has to be concluded in strict and complete compliance with the procedure established by the Constitution.

A peremptory formulation of the question of who is higher and more important—the president or parliament—or the demand that either a presidential or parliamentary form of rule be established represent another constitutional impropriety. The establishment of the presidency was in no way intended to elevate it above the legislature and executive, it was above all a recognition of the need to regulate relations between them and combine, balance, and coordinate their activity. As far as the argument about establishing a presidential or parliamentary republic in our country is concerned, it is to a certain extent surprisingly one-sided in character: It is either or. However, both are perfectly permissible.

In world practice it is customary to distinguish these forms of state rule according to the following basic criteria:

In a presidential republic:

—the government is formed by the president, and he alone has the right to dissolve it or dismiss particular ministers;

—parliament is deprived of the right to monitor the government's activity or dismiss it;

—the post of prime minister is absent and the government is headed by the president.

In a parliamentary republic:

—the government is formed by parliament, it chooses (appoints) the prime minister, the post of president elected by all the people is missing;

—control over the government's activity belongs to parliament;

—parliament enjoys the right to dismiss the government.

These criteria do not usually exist in their pure form, but are combined in a diversity of forms in the practice of many states. In the presidential republic of the United States the members of the Administration (government) are appointed by the president with the agreement of Congress (parliament). In our country, however, parliament considers that forming the government (or, at any rate, appointing the prime minister and main ministers) is its prerogative, while the president claims complete independence of parliament not just in appointing members of the government but also creates, at his own discretion, his own consultative and all other structures. So long as the government and presidential apparatus are completely subordinated to the president, there are no fundamental contradictions between the two branches of now executive power. If a strong government which acquires "independence" appears, will a new conflict—now within executive power—not arise?!

Every agreement presupposes compromise. Verbally, our sides in conflict do not contest this, but in practice they are against any concessions to each other whatsoever. However, it is not so difficult a task to find a way to reach agreement. In the

conditions of Russia (particularly in the present-day situation) a combination of the presidential and parliamentary forms of government is essential.

One such form of combination could be as follows: Parliament chooses the prime minister and forms the cabinet of ministers only on the submission of the president; parliament is entitled to pass a vote of no confidence in the cabinet of ministers or individual ministers (which entails their resignation); the president directly leads the government, is recognized as the head of state, and is vested with considerable powers (here there is no need for a prime minister and the need for the parallel structures of the presidential apparatus disappears); as head of state the president presents an annual report to parliament on the state of the country, outlines the basic areas of the state's domestic and foreign policy, makes legislative initiatives, thereby determining the thrust of parliament's legislative activity, and so forth. The president could be granted the right (under conditions strictly specified by the Constitution) to dissolve parliament and set the date for new parliamentary elections.

It is important that one thing be understood in any structures: The separation of powers has nothing to do with, nor can have anthing to do, with polyarchy.

Universally Elected Presidency Best Option

PM1003122193 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 10 Mar 93 First Edition p 1

[Otto Latsis article: "Boris Yeltsin's Four Questions to the People. In the Center—the Question of Power"]

[Text] On 7 March Russian Federation President B. Yeltsin sent to the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet his versions of the questions for the referendum on the basic provisions of the new Constitution, scheduled for 11 April.

B. Yeltsin offers four questions for the vote:

1. Do you agree that the Russian Federation should be a presidential republic?

2. Do you agree that the Russian Federation's supreme legislative organ should be a bicameral parliament?

3. Do you agree that the new Russian Federation Constitution should be adopted by a Constitutional Assembly representing the multinational people of the Russian Federation?

4. Do you agree that every citizen of the Russian Federation is entitled to possess, use, and dispose of land as an owner?

The questions proposed by the Russian Federation president for the referendum—one on ownership and three on power—clearly reflect the main "sore points" of the whole current political situation.

The question on land has already been discussed many times, and scarcely needs fresh explanations. The question on the shape of parliament is also sufficiently clear: It is impossible to preserve for long the current, strange, two-tier structure, since the thousand-headed congress, assembling for just a few days, is unworkable "by definition," irrespective of its personal composition. The two-stage election of the Supreme Soviet (not by the whole people, by the congress) weakens our permanently operating parliament: Its legitimacy is less than that of the president, who was elected by the entire people. The Supreme Soviet Presidium, an organ built into this design and unknown in world parliamentary practice, receives the opportunity of concentrating power unchecked, approximating it to the old CPSU Central Committee Politburo. It is extremely hard to object to the adoption of a parliamentary structure that has been justified in world experience, in which there is no place for the Congress, but if the new Constitution is designed to abolish the Congress, it is extremely rash to entrust this Congress with its adoption—thereby the need for a Constitutional Assembly becomes obvious.

More complex for people not experienced in the subtleties of law is the question on a presidential form of republic. We are constantly being frightened by the specter of one-man power. Let us remember, however, that the time of the madness of Stalin's one-man power was the time of the "collective president"—the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, and that in the thirties—the period of the most uncontrolled one-man power and the most terrible crimes by the state against the people—Stalin was, from the legal point of view, an ordinary citizen, occupying no post in the state. The trouble lay in the monopoly of power as such, and its outwardly collegiate structure (both in the party with its monopoly rule, and the Supreme Soviet of the day) had no significance. [Kievan] Rus lived through the absolute power of princes, which ended in national catastrophe. Russia lived under the undivided power of the emperor tsar—and again did not avoid catastrophe. There was an unsuccessful attempt to give power to the Constituent Assembly; then there was "All Power to the Soviets!" behind which stood the power of one party; and finally, from 1977 the unlimited power of the party was openly enshrined in the Constitution—and again, the result was catastrophe. So it is not a matter of to which institution absolute power is given. ABSOLUTE power should not be given to anyone, except the people themselves; that is, the voters. ANY state institution is entitled to claim only a defined PART of power, and if "All power to the Congress" has again appeared in the currently operating Russian Federation Constitution with its 300 amendments, then this is a most dangerous oversight, which must be urgently rectified.

In principle democracy can be guaranteed in both a presidential and a parliamentary republic. At the same time in a parliamentary republic—for example, the FRG—given the extremely weak role of the president, the head of government possesses enormous personal

power. The democratic justification for this power lies in the fact the government is automatically headed by the leader of the party for which the people gave the majority of its votes in the elections. In our country a multiparty structure has not yet been built, and the most legitimate, and, at the same time, the most stable power could be the power of the president elected by the whole people, but in any version the most important thing is the separation of powers and the presence of counterbalances to the organs of power. In Japan, for example, parliament can express no confidence in the government, and the government has the right to dissolve the chamber of representatives. The separation of powers also means a strong judiciary. In a presidential republic the president is elected not by parliament but by universal suffrage, and the government is formed by the president, but the legislative functions of parliament are in no way inhibited and parliament's control over the president's activity can be sufficiently effective—as, for example, in the United States, where Congress can even refuse to confirm appropriations for measures projected by the president, and, in an extreme case, dismiss a universally elected president.

When the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet on the very eve of the Eighth Congress begins discussing the president's version of questions, this issue of IZVESTIYA will have already been signed to press. We will not guess as to what our parliament will decide, but at any rate, this decision will become one of those by which all its work will be evaluated.

Supreme Soviet

Report on 9 Mar Supreme Soviet Session

LD0903235393

[Editorial Report] Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian at 2053 GMT on 9 March carries a report on today's Russian Supreme Soviet session in Moscow. The reporter begins by apologizing for the poor quality of the audio and then introduces a recording of the session which begins with the president's representative, Yakovlev, setting out Yeltin's proposed referendum questions and tells how they were arrived at. Following this Deputy Ryabov asks what happens if the people do not vote for a presidential republic. Another deputy asks about land ownership. Yakovlev explains the reason for this wording and says the Congress can act on the basis of the referendum results. Land ownership by foreign citiens must be in accord with the constitution, he says.

Deputy Fedoseyev asks about question three on the constitutional assembly: How will it be formed? He also asks about land ownership. Yakovlev replies that all subjects of the Federation should be involved. Realities have changed since the present deputies were elected, he says, and land ownership concerns all rights of ownership.

Khasbulatov suggests that this session should be televised in full. He puts it to a vote. Then a deputy asks for more details about the meaning of a presidential republic. He also asks for forecasts about the referendum. Yakovlev explains what a presidential republic is, noting that the referendum will be in accordance with the law. Deputy Peruanskiy asks about the meaning of the term subject of the Federation, and how long they should have had to consider the questions. Deputy Plotnikov says that the question should have been stated to refer not to the present but to the future constitution. Yakovlev says the president is fulfilling the decision of the Congress on the referendum and it is clear to what the questions refer.

Tikhonov says that the shock therapy has put the country on the verge of catastrophe. Yakovlev replies that it was not the president who decided on holding a referendum. Solving the political crisis could help to solve the economic crisis, the Seventh Congress decided. The referendum is not about current personalities but about the way the country is to be run for generations to come.

Ryabov, deputy chairman of Supreme Soviet, then recalls the background to the convening of the Eighth Congress. Subjects of the Federation have hardly been capable of participating in the drawing up of the texts when they have only just been presented, he says, adding that he disagrees with Yakovlev's description of a presidential republic. He criticizes the other questions, too.

Deputy Uvarov asks about the role of the Supreme Soviet in determining the questions. The rapporteur tells of the actions that the Supreme Soviet undertook.

A deputy says that the president is trying to discredit the Supreme Soviet. The rapporteur says briefly that the Congress made a mistake in calling the referendum. The localities may decide on their own autonomy when they lose patience with the center's actions. A deputy says that someone is deliberately sabotaging the referendum by not preparing questions, and it is not the president. Ryabov says that the president has only just sent them the questions and they are discussing them immediately.

A deputy asks whether only deputies are concerned for the fate of the country or does Ryabov consider that Yeltsin shares that concern? Deputy Surkhov quotes the law on the referendum stating when the questions have to be ready. Why were no Supreme Soviet questions prepared on time, he asks? Deputy Volkov says some members of the Supreme Soviet working group severely criticized the questions that were prepared and that is why the constitutional commission had not reached a decision.

Tikhonov says that the president expects the Supreme Soviet to express disagreement and thus discredit itself. Ryabov says he cannot express an opinion on this. Khasbulatov then suggests that the debate should end. He says that the questions should be accepted, were it not for tomorrow's Congress. He puts forward a draft decision to take note of the president's questions as a basis.

At 2149 GMT Deputy Lyubimov damnds that the chairman adhere to the accepted procedures. A deputy at the rostrum asks about the fate of the Supreme Soviets in the member republics, the problem of new elections, and a constituent assembly. Another deputy talks about land ownership and complains that the questions set out do not correspond to the needs of the day. No specific decisions on these questions should be taken today, he says, let the Congress make a final decision tomorrow.

Deputy (Adler) then talks about the powers of the president and his responsibilities and the question of a bicameral parliament or a unicameral parliament, and a constitutional assembly. He concludes by talking about private ownership of land.

Deputy Aksyuchits says that the president's actions today show he wants to establish presidential rule. He tried to do this at the seventh congress, he says, and today he complained again about conservative forces actions. He talks about the dangers of armed force being used, and then goes on about land ownership and proposes that cognizance should be taken of the president's move and a decision should be made at the congress on the need for early nationwide elections.

Khasbulatov makes a remark about the relaying of the session. A deputy makes a point about the wording of the referendum and reminds that the draft Constitution has already been adopted. He supports an earlier deputy's views about the holding of a constitutional assembly which would adopt a constitution. He also proposes that a decision on this should be offered for discussion at the congress.

Other proposals and points are then made from the floor. One complains that not all deputies are being filmed. Khasbulatov decides to take a vote to end the debate. It is carried almost unanimously. Various deputies make points from the floor regarding the nonfulfillment of some of the articles of the Seventh Congress decisions.

Yakovlev speaks from the floor in reply to some of the points made by deputies about a presidential republic. He speaks in favor of a bicameral parliament. Deputy Plotnikov says that there are no simple all-embracing answers. Each point should be examined on its merits.

Ryabov makes a proposal from the platform. Khasbulatov puts to the vote a draft decision as a basis: to take cognizance of Yeltsin's questions and forward them to the Congress. No result of the vote is announced. Khasbulatov bids the deputies farewell and the roundup ends.

Yeltsin Addresses Deputies on Eve of Congress

LD0903234393 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2030 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] President Yeltsin's final pre-Congress meeting with deputies, as distinct from previous ones held with individual factions or political blocs, attracted anyone who wanted to come and anyone who had questions for the president personally. That is why it was conducted in the form of a dialogue.

[Begin recording] [Deputy (Rassokhin) from floor] Boris Nikolayevich. Deputy (Rassokhin). I would like you to be very frank on two questions. What is the priority task you aim to achieve, which you as president must tackle at the Congress. The second question is: How do you see the results of this referendum? What are you expecting from it?

[Yeltsin] The first thing, of course, is that we are now living through a difficult period, a period where there is not only an economic crisis but also a constitutional crisis. It is probably dishonest to say this happens by itself and in every country. A constitutional crisis could have been avoided even though the economic crisis continued. During the transition from a planned economy to a market economy, this crisis could not have been avoided. That was impossible. With a good agreement and with a division of functions of all three branches of power—legislative, executive, and judicial—a constitutional crisis could have been avoided. Unfortunately, this did not happen. Therefore, that is the first major task of the Congress.

Nevertheless, today I cannot renounce a referendum, and those who are against it should understand me correctly. As head of executive power, I am fulfilling decisions adopted by the Seventh Congress of People's Deputies. Nine articles were adopted there, eight articles in a bloc, and the first article was to hold a referendum. I officially sent my questions to the Supreme Soviet not less than a month beforehand. So the main task of the Congress is to see that the referendum is held in a peaceful and coordinated way. Let the branches of power really move closer together at the Congress, although they should operate separately.

I have not received any draft constitutional agreement from the chairman of the Supreme Soviet. I haven't received it. The working group has not been invested with any powers, and it is not working in practice. To my great sorrow, my draft constitutional agreement was submitted for discussion by the Supreme Soviet. That was not the intention.

As for the referendum, the decision contains the cunning Clause 9, which says that the provisions of the first eight clauses cannot be regarded in isolation. What does this mean? If the Congress were to suddenly cancel the referendum, it would not be good for anyone, whether an individual leader or a body. It is intrinsically bad when one and the same body adopts a decision and then withdraws it. But since that's the way things are, it follows that it ought to rescind the whole decision of the Congress—all eight articles, not just the ninth one. You understand?

This means that the balance and consensus worked out by the conciliation commission during the work of the

Seventh Congress of People's Deputies are being disturbed. After all, the agreement was worked out in harmony, both sides being equally represented. There is no argument about this; everyone agreed and voted at the Congress.

Subsequently and suddenly, attempts were made to revise the agreement, and so forth. That is why a way out has to be provided under all circumstances.

If the referendum is cancelled, how can the agreement be left untouched? I could agree to this, but only on one condition: if, say, the referendum is cancelled, a special decision on the agreement will have to be adopted with our consensus, the consensus of the sides. That is the only way, an objective fact.

What do I expect of the referendum? Well, I think we must wait two days, so as not to indulge in conjectures.

[Deputy (Yegorov)] We are all very grateful that at long last you had a meeting not just with the radical democrats but also with normal democrats. [laughter]

[Yeltsin] And the Civic union, who are they? Are they radicals?

[(Yegorov)] I cannot tell these nuances.

[Yeltsin, interrupting] But I can say, they are in the center, and that is why I have meetings with the center and the left-wingers and the right-wingers, but not with extremists.

[(Yegorov)] Does it not seem to you that the very fact that your questions were published so late in the day implies some degree of disrespect toward the subjects of the Federation? That is the first point. Moreover, to set aside so little time to explain things means that there is a certain lack of respect for all voters. How on earth can such complex issues be explained in a matter of 10 days?

[Yeltsin] Yes, of course there is a certain element of clumsiness, as you say, in this matter, but I was unable to give any question while there were no questions from the Supreme Soviet. How could I give any? The Supreme Soviet did not accept the questions.

When I was meeting earlier with administration heads, virtually all four questions of mine were being discussed everywhere. The administration head knows that everyone supports these four questions, that they are topical, and necessary to people at the present time. You understand? Therefore there is no lack of respect for the people here, but to tell the people that there will be a referendum—that is, give them the right to decide a question, and then take this back—that would be lack of respect.

[Deputy (Yegorov)] Deputy (Yegorov) from Vladimir Oblast. Esteemed Boris Nikolayevich, in recent times your opponents have been continually stirring up rumors that you want to get even with conservative deputies; that is, disband parliament or Congress. What do you say to this? Second, in connection with the question put forward by you for the referendum on a presidential republic, does not this mean that you personally favour of strict, personal authority?

[Yeltsin] I understand. Regarding the conservative deputies, as you termed them. In my experience of the struggles, defenses, attacks since 1987, I know very well that it is precisely these deputies who circulate the rumors—not me. God forbid.

As to breaking up the Congress, breaking up the Supreme Soviet, the soviets— do you really think this? Have I really behaved in such a way that you think this of me? And all this incitement in order to stir up these questions everywhere on television, in the newspapers, on the radio, etc. There are many who enjoy doing this. No; yet again I say no. Work calmly, and security will be ensured in a calm way. Do not set up your detachments; we will have enough of our own Kremlin detachments which will ensure that you work in a normal and calm way.

I am a supporter of strong state power—without the word personal—a strong state power, a strong legislative power, a strong executive power, and a strong judicial power which act separately, do not put pressure on one another, and do not do another's work. The final result of this is that we would have a strong state, a strong Russia.

[Unidentified deputy] Currently, any political action in Russia is a major issue, like the referendum or elections. In my view Russia faces mortal dangers in the nearest future, to be honest.

[Yeltsin] Today, the statement of the heads of republics contains this proposal: in the course of the years 1993 and 1994, no referendums, elections, or other major political actions are to be staged. Tomorrow they wish to put this question on the agenda. I said: Just do not drag me into this. Write heads of republics and not the council of heads of republics. That is indeed what they wrote. Well, I said that is the way you want it.

[Deputy (Yevdokimov)] Deputy (Yevdokimov) from Orel Oblast. [Words indistinct] the constitutional crisis is also a political crisis. This can be seen in the attempts by the Supreme Soviet to cancel the referendum, thereby repealing a congress decision. Then there are attempts by oblast soviets—in 20 regions already—to arrange for the reelection of administration heads. This is very dangerous. That is to say, all this shows that a constitutional, political crisis does indeed exist. My second question is: When all is said and done, can you imagine a way out of this crisis, this political crisis?

[Yeltsin] Well, I too am convinced that we have a crisis. I believe we have a constitutional crisis and it should be solved by common consent, but not by the kind of consent practiced by the Congress, which makes an agreement and then revokes it a month later. Do you understand? Who is to be belived after that—the Lord Almighty?

[Unidentified deputy] What is your opinion? Do you understand separation of powers as a system where the executive power is independent from the legislative power? This is the first question. The second is very short: How do you see the future of the local soviets? Thank you.

[Yeltsin] I believe, I perceive the principle of separation of powers as a system where the executive power is controlled by the legislative power but in such a way that the legislative power does not try to replace the executive power. This is the issue in question—be this bank operations, property funds, or any such thing. This would mean a direct infringement of executive power. We should separate them. One thing should go to the government, the other to the Supreme Soviet. Regarding control, it means ministers and members of the government being summoned to the Supreme Soviet to report back or give information. This goes without saying, and this is how I understand it.

As for the local soviets: If the soviets behave like that toward their own executive bodies, in other words, if they treat the executive bodies as though they were the executive bodies of the soviets, not of the oblasts, krays, or towns, then you must realize that they will make it hard for themselves, but if they regard the executive body as being not the executive body of the soviet but the executive body of the territory or region, then there will be harmony between them.

[Unidentified deputy] [Words indistinct] try to accuse the president of inaction and, in the absence of activities directed toward the defense of citizens' constitutional rights and freedoms. The shouting is done by those people—and you have just heard their speeches—those people who are doing their utmost to see that we do not have a unified legal system on the territory of the Russian Federation. I should like to draw attention to that fact. It is extremely important. We can shout as much as we like in this hall about human rights, but if we vote and try to bring about a situation in which we have no unified legal system, all that will be doomed to failure, as the saying goes. Now I'll return to the question. Can any constitutional agreement adopted at the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation be constitutional if it is not implemented in accordance with Article 3, part 1, and Article 104, part 1?

[Yeltsin] No, I submitted the constitutional accord to the Supreme Soviet.

[Unidentified speaker] It was simply not published.

[Yeltsin] They have it all there, and I do not have a second agreement. I do have yet another option, because at that time I said I do have options and then everyone thought: well, this is the extreme option—to dismiss everybody, and so on. Nothing of the kind! I have, for example, an option to adopt the law on power where the functions of the powers and division of the powers will be very precisely outlined. There are only two and a half pages, six articles, in all. If the congress adopts this law, everything will become clear to all of us—to the legislative, executive, and judicial powers—and there will be no constitutional crisis of any kind. Well, go on, adopt it. This should be adopted by the people's deputies.

[Unidentified speaker] Let us take a break in our polemics, at least. You know, what you have suggested here today could be adopted. Will the Congress please reject such destabilizing statements and all sorts of referenda and get down to work on the real concrete solutions for our economy, because it is indeed possible to find such solutions. Please, let us do without all those middlemen who just spoil everything. Pardon me for saying this.

[Yeltsin] I agree. Once again I declare it here before you, esteemed people's deputies: I favor accord. I favor all the branches of power—the legislative, executive, and judicial branches—working in peace. I favor the division of powers. I favor each power being strong on its own, and I also favor a strong state power for Russia as the whole. I am in favor of all of this. If you support this too, let us hold the congress in a peaceful manner and come to some constructive decisions. If one solution is not suitable, we will find another. If another one is not suitable, we will aim for a third one, and so on. We have quite a few options up our sleeve. Eventually we will find a decision which suits both sides and which calms our population down as well. [end recording]

Answers Questions

LD0903175993 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1610 GMT 9 Mar 93

[From the "Panorama" program]

[Text] We have already told our listeners about Boris Yeltsin's meeting with Russian people's deputies. It was held in the Kremlin. Here are some details: On the line in the studio is our observer Yuliy Semenov.

[Semenov] Good evening. You know that the meeting has not ended; it is still going on and it has been in progress for two hours now. Some 200 Russian deputies have come to the meeting. The president declined to speak and immediately began to reply to journalists' questions. He set out his position with regard to the referendum, the nature of the questions and the idea behind this, and said that he considers himself committed to fulfilling the decision of the previous congress on holding a referendum. At the same time he allows for a moratorium on the referendum, but then the question arises of a package of agreements, the nine points of a constitutional agreement. Clearly, a special decision of the congress will be required so that the balance of branches of power is preserved.

The president categorically refuted rumors of any possible dissolution either of the congress or the Supreme Soviet or any other structures and stated that in the main these rumors are being put out by conservatives and representatives of the irreconcilable opposition.

It has to be said, however, that at this meeting certain deputies, mainly those of a radical democratic persuasion, tried to win over the president into introducing direct presidential rule, but he said that he is categorically against this; he is a proponent of strong power, including strong presidential power, and for maintaining its balance with the other branches of power.

The meeting which is being held is, in my view, quite an interesting one, with many different opinions being voiced, with not as many questions being put as deputies' opinions, although there may also be a touch of a meeting for a meeting's sake. Well, as kind of an amusing aside, one of the deputies proposed a constitutional assembly to adopt a new constitution and to set up a lottery to appoint one man to represent a million, or something along those lines.

Well I think that on the eve of the congress, it is possible to let off a bit of steam, and it would be useful to calm heated emotions. It is too early to sum up the results of the meeting: It is still going on and I think that we willl be able to broadcast information in some form before the end of the Panorama program. Yuliy Semenov from the Kremlin.

Submits Referendum Questions

LD0903144493 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1310 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS parliamentary correspondent Yuriy Filippov]

[Text] Moscow, 9 Mar—Today, at a joint sitting of the chambers of the Russian parliament, the spokesman of the Russian president in the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet, Anatoliy Sliva, submitted for consideration by members of parliament the four questions proposed by the president for the 11 April referendum. The Russian Federation president proposed that the following questions be submitted to a referendum.

1. Do you agree that the Russian Federation should be a presidential republic? (Yes or No)

2. Do you agree that the top legislature of the Russian Federation should be a bicameral parliament? (Yes or No)

3. Do you agree that a new constitution of the Russian Federation should be adopted by a constitutional assembly representing the multinational population of the Russian Federation? (Yes or No)

4. Do you agree that each citizen of the Russian Federation has the right to possess, use and manage land as an owner? (Yes or No)

Having heard the spokesman of the president at the Supreme Soviet, the deputies began discussing the proposed questions.

Changes Wording of One Question

OW0903164993 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1640 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Russian President Boris Yeltsin on Tuesday [9 March] changed the wording of one of the four questions proposed for the national referendum on the basic tenets of the constitution, which is planned for April 11. The second question will now read: "Do you agree that the sole supreme legislative body of the Russian Federation should be a two chamber parliament?" The earlier version of the question did not include the word "sole."

At a Russian Supreme Soviet session held Tuesday to discuss the president's questions, presidential representative Anatoliy Sliva said that the president's questions had integrated the proposals which various parties and movements submitted to the government commission for preparing and conducting the referendum.

Believes Referendum 'Can be Put Off'

LD0903185493 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1827 GMT 9 Mar 93

["Yeltsin Believes That Referendum Can be Put Off"—ITAR- TASS headline; by ITAR-TASS correspondent Gennadiy Talalayev]

[Text] Moscow March 9 TASS—Russian President Boris Yeltsin believes that the number one task of the Eighth Extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies opening on Wednesday [10 March] is "to hold it peacefully, without a brawl" and to make sure that the government branches act in coordination but separately. He made this statement at a meeting with a large group of people's deputies representing a wide political spectrum today.

Yeltsin said such a decision by the forthcoming Congress would suit him if the resolution by the Seventh Congress of Russian People's Deputies "On Stabilising the Constitutional System in the Russian Federation" be supplemented with a statement adopted today by heads of the republics and territorial and regional administration leaders that no referenda, elections or any other major political events be held in 1993-1994. In so doing, the rest of the points of the resolution by the Seventh Congress would remain in force. In this case, the Congress could be wrapped up in half a day.

Yeltsin categorically denied allegations that he intends to dissolve the representative government bodies. He said these rumours are spread by conservative forces. "Please, work calmly, nobody will disturb you," Yeltsin said.

According to Yeltsin, he wants any branch of government to be strong—legislative, executive and judiciary. By and large, he is an advocate of the strong state and strong Russia.

Yeltsin also spoke out against early elections for parliament. He believes that deputies should work until the term of their powers expires. It is yet unknown what will be the new composition of the pool of deputies, he added. He called for the executive and legislative government bodies to operate in coordination despite the existing difficulties.

Parliament Does Not Approve President's Questions

LD0903162893 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1608 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS parliamentary correspondent Yuriy Filippov]

[Text] Moscow March 9 TASS—The Russian Supreme Soviet has decided to take into account, and not approve the president- submitted information and send his proposals for the consideration of the 8th Extraordinary Congress of Russian People's Deputies.

During the discussion of president-proposed issues to be put on the referendum on April 11, Russian Parliament Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov noted the Supreme Soviet could have approved them today, if not for two circumstances.

The first one - the president-offered questions should be discussed by the 8th Extraordinary Congress of Russian People's Deputies to open in Moscow tomorrow, and second - such an important decision cannot be taken without due account of the opinion of Russian Federation subjects, and this opinion is not known yet.

After a brief discussion, deputies adopted a resolution, saying the Supreme Soviet takes into account the information submitted by the Russian president and submits his proposals to the 8th Congress of Russian People's Deputies for consideration.

Further Consideration of Questions

OW0903165393 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1641 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] On Tuesday [9 March] the Russian Supreme Soviet considered the questions for the referendum presented by President Boris Yeltsin. The parliament's resolution states that the 8th extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies should adopt a final decision on the president's questions.

Nikolay Ryabov, deputy chairman of Russia's parliament, called on parliamentarians to abstain from adopting any decision on the presidential wording of the questions. He proposed to submit them to the Congress of People's Deputies for final consideration.

Ryabov underlined that he himself considers the package of questions proposed by the President unacceptable. "There is no such juridical term as presidential republic", he said. The wording concerning adoption of the country's new Constitution by the constitutional assembly also arouses Ryabov's objections. The two other questions, Ryabov pointed out, do not contradict basic provisions of the draft of a new Constitution which was presented to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet by the constitutional commission.

The parliament's deputy chairman reproached Boris Yeltsin for submitting his questions for the referendum too late for consideration by parliament. According to the law, they should be confirmed by March 12. Ryabov emphasized that there has been no procedure to determine the questions, by the federation's subjects as well. This, he said, was one of the reasons that forced parliament to convene an extraordinary Congress to solve the referendum's problems.

Ryabov Urges Confirmation of Referendum Text

LD0903171093 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1530 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS parliamentary correspondent Ivan Novikov]

[Text] Moscow, 9 March—The resolution of the Seventh Congress of People's Deputies made it incumbent on the Supreme Soviet to confirm the text of the draft basic provisions of the new Russian Constitution that are being put forward for referendum. This was recalled by Supreme Soviet Deputy Chairman Nikolay Ryabov, speaking today at the afternoon session of the Russian Supreme Soviet. Does this mean that the task of elaborating and agreeing to that text has been given to the Supreme Soviet? According to the co-chairman of the working group set up for such an elaboration, this, as he said, "absolutely does not follow" from the text of the congress decision. All the more so since there is a Constitutional Commission that, in accordance with the existing instruction, is charged with carrying out the preparation of documents concerned with constitutional reform, Nikolay Ryabov added.

"There is no need to tell us now that the Supreme Soviet is guilty of the fact that there is still no text of the basic provisions of the new Constitution," he declared, reminding "those who are good at applauding" that the chairman of the Constitutional Commission is Boris Yeltsin. As for Nikolay Ryabov, in his capacity as deputy chairman of that commission he had "assembled its working group and by 25 January had presented the draft basic provisions in strict accordance with the resolution of the congress." This document had been sent to parliamentary committees and commissions and also to the president and the Constitutional Court.

On 9 February, Nikolay Ryabov recalled, a plenary session of the Constitutional Commission took place under the chairmanship of Boris Yeltsin on the question of the draft basic provisions of the new Constitution that were being put forward for referendum, but a decision of the Constitutional Commission, according to Nikolay Ryabov, was not made.

As a result, he proposed that the questions proposed by the president should be taken cognizance of and sent to the congress. "It is necessary to make a political decision without letting our own mistakes get in the way," the deputy chairman of the Constitutional Commission emphasized, giving it to be understood by the deputies that it was necessary to drop the idea of holding a referendum.

Khasbulatov Addresses News Conference

LD0903174293 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1530 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Report on news conference by Supreme Soviet Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov at Parliament building in Moscow on 9 March—recorded]

[Text] [Announcer] On the eve of the extraordinary Congress of Russia's People's Deputies which opens tomorrow, Parliament Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov held a meeting with journalists. The main attention of the press is currently focussed on two main issues which figure on the agenda of the forthcoming Congress: the 11 April referendum and the observance of the Constitution by the highest bodies of state authorities.

The parliament speaker began his speech by mentioning an aspect that is somehow removed from the mainstream: he focussed attention on the role of the interparliamentary assembly, of which he is the chairman.

[Khasbulatov] When I was elected chairman of the interparliamentary assembly and, subsequently St. Petersburg was chosen as the headquarters of this assembly by the peoples of the former republics and now of independent states, their parliaments naturally expected that I would personally play an active part here and that the same would apply to the Supreme Soviet and our federal authorities. Unfortunately, the incessant tension that is being artificially whipped up in our country at the federal level makes it impossible to carry out what is indeed a very large number of peaceful and unifying directions in our activities, although people's very serious desire to honor their alliance obligations toward rapprochement of positions at all levels is at present something that is quite clear.

Frankly, many people see the interparliamentary assembly, in the context of the political activity of the Commonwealth countries, as the basis of the unifying process of independent states. It is from this point of view, obviously, that some provisions of the sovereignty declaration, adopted by the First Congress of Russian Federation People's Deputies, ought to be revised or, perhaps, interpreted anew. Surely, and let us be blunt, the most profound apologies are due from us toward Russians and millions of people who now live or have suddenly found themselves in other states, other territories.

The same applies to millions of people, Ukrainians, for instance, who live here in Russia and who have the status, as it were, of foreign citizens. As you can see, it is a very complex knot of problems, a very complex knot. Of course, solving them is vitally necessary for the existence of the Russian state as a single entity, a state that is developing well and dynamically and that lives in friendship, peace, and prosperity.

This is how I regard the upcoming Congress which must put some sort of order into certain issues connected with both the organizing of the referendum and the questions suggested by the Russian Federation president. In any case, the leadership of the Supreme Soviet is determined to hold this Congress in a calm way, with as much business-like approach as possible. We will try to consider specific issues, find out the opinions and attitudes of our people, subjects of the Russian Federation, and we will try to adopt a well considered decision.

You know that our deputies differ. They assess the situation in different ways. Some are better informed than others. Such issues as impeaching the president or the chairman of the Supreme Soviet are already continually discussed here, on our premises. Of course, some will try to raise such issues in the same way as they were raised before. There is nothing new or unexpected here for me; the same is true for you, I believe.

[Unidentified journalist] Can this crisis be resolved on the basis of the present Constitution, or should appropriate amendments be made to expand the consensus?

[Khasbulatov] First and foremost, I would like to say that the present Constitution is the only constitution we have. Nobody is entitled to violate it. The constitution is the key law of any society which seeks to live in accordance with normal laws. If public servants think that they do not have to obey the constitution, they must be outlawed.

[Unidentified journalist] [Word indistinct] the president's questions for the referendum will be soon considered. What is your attitude to these questions?

[Khasbulatov] If I am asked my opinion, I would agree with these questions, adding, naturally, that since these questions are being insisted on by the president, he should also determine the degree of responsibility if, say, the relevant referendum does not take place.

[Unidentified journalist] What dangers may arise from the Congress?

[Khasbulatov] What dangers? I think there will be no dangers from the Congress. The main thing is that they should not be provoked. For example, I am very concerned about the various signals, the various reports, connected with the possibility of people actually implementing the hints they have dropped about using nonconstitutional methods, of adopting options that are being held in reserve. These hints have been dropped several times and they are causing great alarm in our society.

In general, society should understand that the choice is now simple—either there will be democratic development or a totalitarian regime. The point is, it seems to me, that the top

echelons of executive power are gradually coming to the conclusion that any further development, and in particular the implementation of the economic reforms, is impossible as long as we continue along our present path, along the chosen firm democratic path.

I would like to say to you that I firmly believe in the democratic path for our society's development. I consider democratic development to be totally compatible with the implementation of deep-going reforms in our society.

[Unidentified Spanish journalist] I am [name indistinct] from Spanish radio. At the Congress, much will depend on the deputies' intellectual potential. I have a question about this: Will experts of the deputies' factions be allowed into the meeting hall?

[Khasbulatov] You know, it is not only on the intellectual potential of the deputies that much depends. Much also depends on the intellectual potential of the executive power, as you know. Unfortunately, it is difficult for me to say here that the other side has greater intellectual potential, even though I agree to some extent with your critical attitude to our corps of deputies.

[Journalist] Will they be allowed in?

[Khasbulatov] Why not? Everyone who needs to come in will be allowed in, naturally. Excuse me, but do deputies need some sort of intellectual instruments which they bring with them? I think the deputies, who are working in very complicated conditions, have become combative deputies who rely in the first instance on their own heads.

Take a look at the sections of the constitution which deal with the powers of the president. Compare them with the ones in force when he was elected president—on the basis of the Law on the President. Compare the powers he had then with the powers he has now, the ones enshrined in the present constitution. You will see that they have been greatly reinforced and strengthened. So you just cannot say that there has been any encroachment on them—if you conscientiously and honestly read what this constitution says.

There are indeed these contradictions, but no matter what these contradictions may be, the important thing is that they should be constitutional contradictions. It is up to the legislature to remove these contradictions. It is the duty of the executive branch—and that even includes the supreme public servant—to obey this constitution and hold it sacred, to consult with the legislators on the execution of this constitution.

No public servant is entitled to operate outside this constitution. This is the most sacrosanct law for any public servant.

It would be good if the president, as the supreme public servant, were to stress the need to comply with this law. If we see the supreme public servant striving to avoid compliance with the constitution, how, for instance, will we tackle crime? I ask you: how can we do this? Ask yourselves. Aren't you law-abiding citizens? Of course you are. Therefore, I don't think that you will approve of a public servant who openly despises the constitution.

[Question indistinct]

[Khasbulatov] I just do not know. I do not know.

[Unidentified journalist] You said you would agree to the president's questions, if only some responsibility was envisaged for the outcome. What do you have in mind, what measure of responsibility?

[Khasbulatov] I don't know. For example, when I take it upon myself to make a crucial decision, it seems to me that I have to say that if I do not win support, I will have to do this and that, and I pledge myself to do this and that. That is what I mean. After all, each one of us has to bear a degree of responsibility. There can be no rights without responsibilities. There were notorious times, as you may well remember, when the Politburo made decisions for everybody and yet bore no responsibility.

I must tell you bluntly that the attempts by some officials—I do not want to mention any specific names now—to make very serious decisions and yet to refuse to bear responsibility for their consequences do not suit me at all. In any normally functioning constitutional state this would not happen.

Executive Must 'Religiously' Observe Basic Law

LD0903144293 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1347 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Ivan Novikov]

[Text] Moscow March 9—The Seventh Congress of People's Deputies' decision to hold a nationwide referendum on the main provisions of a new Russian Constitution was "a serious mistake," Ruslan Khasbulatov told journalists at the parliament building today.

Answering questions from the media, he remarked that even then he "vaguely suspected that we were on the wrong track when we repealed constitutional rules by non-constitutional methods."

Speaking about the forthcoming Eighth Congress of People's Deputies, the chairman of the Supreme Soviet said that "the parliamentary leadership is firmly set on holding a calm congress in a businesslike atmosphere and reaching a balanced decision."

One of the journalists was interested in whether deputies would raise the question of confidence in the president at the congress. "It is difficult for me to say what questions will be raised at the congress," Ruslan Khasbulatov said. "Such questions have become usual in our corridors. Of course, someone may possibly try to raise them, as they have done in the past."

Ruslan Khasbulatov noted that the crisis situation that had emerged "can be resolved only on the basis of the currently operating Constitution, which no one has the right to violate." At the same time the speaker of parliament recalled that there were no few contradictions in the existing Constitution. "It is the business of the legislators to remove them, and the business of the executive power, even if the matter concerns the highest functionary, to observe religiously the basic law of the state," he emphasized.

Khasbulatov Says Yeltsin Must Take Responsibility

LD0903135493 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1314 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS parliamentary correspondent Ivan Novikov]

[Text] Moscow March 9 TASS—The Russian president has the right to submit questions he proposes to a referendum, but the head of state must identify his share of responsibility if the plebiscite fails to produce results, Russian Parliament Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov told a briefing in the Russian parliament building today.

Khasbulatov believes that the failure of the national referendum on power will sharply weaken state authority, to say nothing of wasting billions of roubles.

While agreeing in principles to the questions proposed by Boris Yeltsin for the national referendum, the parliament chairman noted along with this that he "cannot say how the Supreme Soviet (parliament) and the Congress of Peoples' Deputies (supreme legislature) will look at them".

In addition, Ruslan Khasbulatov said it was not quite clear to him what the president means when he refers to the constitutional assembly which, according to him, must adopt the country's new constitution. This needs clearing up, Khasbulatov stressed.

Regional Affairs

Abkhaz Defense Ministry To Inspect All Ships

LD0903144793 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1300 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Vadim Byrkin]

[Text] Moscow, 9 March—All vessels leaving the ports of Sukhumi and Ochamchira, no matter whose flag they are flying, will be stopped for inspection. Today, the Abkhaz Defense Ministry issued a statement to this effect because exporting property stolen from Abkhaz towns controlled by Georgian troops is becoming widespread.

According to the Defense Ministry, the Georgians took 40 truckloads of goods out of these towns on Monday. The Abkhaz Defense Ministry warned that very resolute steps, in accordance with international law, will be taken against the owners and captains of vessels carrying stolen property.

An ITAR-TASS correspondent learned from the press service of Abkhazia's plenipotentiary mission in Moscow that this is the second time the Abkhaz Defense Ministry has issued such a statement. The first was issued on 18 February, after which the Abkhaz side detained three ships that were taking property out of Abkhazia.

Aushev Feels Ingushetia Needs Strong Presidential Power

OW0903181193 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1644 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] In an interview with Interfax, President of Ingushetia Ruslan Aushev spoke in favor of strong presidential power in the republic, since he views that as the only way of solving their crisis. He said the parliamentary elections planned for April 11 will aggravate the situation, since the problem with the territorial organization of voting districts in connection with the disputed status of the Prigorodnyy Region of North Ossetia remains unsolved. The region was a part of Ingushetia until 1944, when, after deporting the Ingush, it was given to North Ossetia.

Aushev feels that the parliamentary elections must be conducted with consideration for national traditions and customs, as well as tribal and "teip" structures ("family"—at present there are 37 families in Ingushetia, 10 of which are the most influential—IF [INTERFAX]).

Aushev did not rule out the possibility of calling a congress of the peoples of Ingushetia "in order to find out their opinions on the matter."

Internal Affairs Officials Disappear in Ingushetia

LD0903213993 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 2100 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] The disappearance of two officials of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs in Ingushetia was reported today. It happened on 8 March at a checkpoint in the area of the village of Barsuki. An ITAR-TASS correspondent was told at the operational investigation group of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs working in Nazran that the militiamen on sentry duty were taken away in a yellow automobile. Search operations carried out today have not yet led to the discovery of the missing men.

Ossetian-Ingush Conflict Zone Situation Unchanged

LD0903160893 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1512 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Valeriy Shanayev]

[Text] Vladikavkaz March 9 TASS—The social-political situation in Northern Ossetia and Ingushetia has not changed over the past 24 hours.

Russian peace-making forces completely control the situation in the armed conflict zone and continue to ensure the state of emergency regime. No fire exchanges or local spots of armed confrontation on the inter-ethnic grounds have been registered over the period. Another round of the Ossetian-Ingush negotiations on refugee issues is scheduled for March 16 in Kislovodsk.

At the same time, according to estimations of the temporary administration headquarters, the crime situation remains difficult. A total of 36 people have been detained for violating the curfew and the state of emergency regime, nine crimes and incidents have been registered and about 3,000 cars inspected over the past 24 hours.

An unidentified person threw a grenade last night in a Vladikavkaz Street, wounding three persons with grenade fragments. Several robberies, car hijacks and thefts of state and personal property have been registered over the period in the conflict zone.

The operative-investigation group of the Russian Interior Ministry has removed 12 pieces of fire arms, grenades, hundreds of cartridges of various caliber, a radio station and transmitting devices from the population.

Militia details enhanced control over transport communications on territories of Northern Ossetia and Ingushetia. Ten air fights were inspected at Vladikavkaz and Ingushetia airports. Six commuter trains and two long-distance trains were inspected at Beslan and Nazran railway stations. No items prohibited for transportation were revealed.

Tatar Mishandling of FRG Contract Imperils Project

PM1003103993 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 6 Mar 93 First Edition p 4

[Boris Bronshteyn report: "Tatarstan Puts Its Trust in Oil, Being Unable To Get Everything Else Out of Ground"]

[Text] Kazan—The Republic of Tatarstan law on minerals has come into force. It states that Tatarstan's minerals are its property, and the right to possess, use, and dispose of them in the people's name belongs to the republic's Supreme Soviet.

Tatarstan's desire to dispose of its underground riches carefully is perfectly understandable, for this is one of the conditions for realizing the state sovereignty proclaimed by the former autonomous republic. People here pin such great hopes on oil alone that it seems to many as though this alone is sufficient for economic prosperity.

But the republic's government has evidently already come to realize that the oil sector's successes do not make up for the appreciable lag in extracting and utilizing certain other minerals. The complex nature of things here can be seen in the example of gypsum, which farsighted people call the construction material of the 21st century.

One of the largest gypsum deposits in Europe is located in Tatarstan (not many people know this). Where the Kama flows into the Volga the Kamsko-Ustinskiy Mine has been worked ever since the beginning of the century. According to specialists' estimates, there is enough gypsum here for almost 100 years, and the question of extraction is not yet a problem. It is a question of how to utilize what is extracted. At present Tatarstan uses only approximately 10 percent of the crude gypsum that is extracted (approximately 700,000 cubic meters of the valuable rock is extracted annually) for the needs of construction in its own republic. There is a gypsum plant on the outskirts of Kazan, but it is old, with a small capacity, and people no longer seem to pin their former hopes on its modernization.

Other, new plans for the utilization and processing of crude gypsum have emerged in recent years, connected with international economic cooperation, which Tatarstan now readily undertakes. Contacts have arisen with the authoritative German firm of Knauf Engineering, whose technology is used to produce more than 25 percent of world gypsum output. A contract for the supply of equipment from Germany for a new plant was concluded in January of last year, and in April the Tatarstan Cabinet of Ministers approved the schedule of payments. But, despite this, an advance was not issued to the German side—either on schedule or after the expiration of the deadline.

The Germans politely inquired several times whether their partners in Tatarstan had changed their mind about developing gypsum production. In return they received assurances of Kazan's unshakable intentions, but then in August their questions ceased to be answered.

Of course, such a tactic on the part of government officials does not enhance Tatarstan's authority in the eyes of its partners abroad. More importantly, something else is understandable: There is a long way to go from wishing to dispose sensibly of mineral wealth to knowing how to do so. The distance is far greater than that from the earth's surface to gold-bearing deposits.

EC Suggests Model for Free Economic Zone in Kuzbass

OW0903181393 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1644 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] As Interfax learned from the head of the Kemerovo Region Administration, Sergey Lobarev, last week the European Community's commission for economic research signed a $1.5 Mn [million] contract with the French-Belgian firm Sema Group for a consulting

project to aid the Kuznetsk coal-mining area. The contract was signed in the framework of the European Community's [EC] program for aid to various regions of the former Soviet Union.

Sema group is the winner of international bidding which involved 6 other foreign companies. According to the terms of the deal, a free economic zone in the Kuznetsk coal-mining area (Kuzbass) should be set up.

Parallelly the Kuzbass Administration conducted a contest for a similar project among entrepreneurs inside Russia. The contest was won by a program worked out by Professor Robert Snipper from a research center in Novosibirsk.

The project offered by the EC has not reached the Kuzbass Administration yet. Sema Group representatives are expected to arrive in Kuzbass before the end of March to discuss the terms of its implementation.

Sverdlovsk Firms Invited To Build Nuclear Plant in China

LD1003101293 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0839 GMT 10 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent]

[Text] Yekaterinburg March 10 TASS—Sverdlovsk region's design and industrial enterprises, which participated in a fair held in China, received an offer to build a nuclear power station near Harbin.

Forty Ural enterprises and firms displayed their goods and technologies in China. As a result of the fair, the two sides reached agreements on the reconstruction and supply of Ural-made equipment to more than 20 metallurgical and engineering plants in Heilungkiang Province, and the establishment of joint ventures to manufacture various equipment.

International Affairs

Thaw in Relations With Russia Seen as Short-Lived

MK1003104093 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 9 Mar 93 p 2

[Vadim Bardin report: Congress of Entrepreneurs of Ukraine. Russian-Ukrainian Thaw Will Be Short-Lived"]

[Text] Ukraine is getting ready to rethink its role as a traditional disturber of peace in the CIS, and is demonstrating a more constructive approach to its links with Russia. This follows from the results of the second Congress of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Ukraine that ended on 6 March, and from the address made during it by Leonid Kravchuk, the country's president. KOMMERSANT-DAILY experts, however, believe that if a thaw in Russian-Ukrainian relations takes place at all, it will be of a temporary nature.

The Ukrainian industrialists' congress discussed ways to overcome the crisis in the national economy. The highlight of the congress was an address by President Leonid Kravchuk, which contained new assessments of the role of the republic's economic links with Russia.

Analyzing the causes of the crisis, Kravchuk noted that Ukraine had clearly overestimated the possibilities of its national economy and disregarded its serious structural disproportions. In doing so, the president recognized Ukraine's existing dependence on the Russian economy. He observed: "We have belatedly assessed the dependence of Ukraine's monetary system on the Russian Central Bank's emission policy." Kravchuk stated that Ukrainian leaders had never and nowhere spoken of severing economic links with Russia.

Ukrainian entrepreneurs supported the president's proposal to straighten out credit and finance relations with Russia and to resolve all questions relating to the creation of conditions for the free movement of goods, capital, and manpower between the two states. It was plainly stated at the congress that Ukrainian industrialists would do all in their power to restore economic links with Russia.

The changes in the position of Ukrainian leaders result from the scale of the economic hardships confronting the republic, which have canceled its ambitious plans of the past. The most acute problems are the shortage of oil and convertible currency. In these conditions, Ukraine—last among CIS countries—is making a choice in favor of stronger ties with Russia. How profound this turn is will become apparent in the very near future. A regular session of the Council of CIS Heads of State and Government is scheduled to take place in Moscow on 12 March. This is also when Russo-Ukrainian talks on deliveries of oil and gas, and on dividing up the former USSR's assets and liabilities, will be continued.

Even if a turn in Kiev's policy takes place after all, however, it will be of a temporary nature, KOMMERSANT-DAILY experts feel. It is not a matter of political preferences. As soon as Ukraine is able to smooth over, owing to stronger cooperation with Russia, the more acute manifestations of the economic crisis, and puts on the agenda the tasks of a structural rebuilding of its economy, its economic links will have to switch over to developed countries that would be able to render it real assistance in renovating its production facilities. The links of other CIS countries with Russia will go through the same phases. As for Russia itself, it has to cut back on the proportion of its output that it delivers to Commonwealth countries, if it is not going to limit its presence on the world market to the role of supplicant, and instead seriously use its foreign economic relations potential to upgrade its own economy.

Russia's positions are illustrated by the situation that took shape in the oil-producing industry. According to information from the Ministry of Fuel and Energy, the share of former Union republics in deliveries of Russian oil has already dropped from one-third in 1991 to one-fourth in 1992. As for 1993, the total volume of export is assessed at 45.9 million tonnes, out of which 25 million tonnes are needed to meet the import requirements of the oil industry itself. Thus "non-tied" exports in 1993 are assessed by the Ministry of Fuel and Energy at 20.9 million tonnes, whereas Ukraine alone has assessed its requirements at 45 million tonnes. Apparently, deliveries of oil for hard currency will and must be a priority.

Thus, the development of economic cooperation between CIS countries and Russia is clearly showing a cyclical pattern: The phase of nationalist economic romanticism is already past; there is the peak of economic hardships that the CIS countries are enduring at present, and which is prompting them to restore the severed ties; and there is the phase of pulling out of the economic crisis and of renewing the economic structure and fixed production assets, which objectively orient CIS countries toward collaboration with developed countries among which neither Russia nor Ukraine may feature. The decisions of the latest congress of Ukrainian industrialists and entrepreneurs make it possible to conclude that Ukraine is entering the second phase of this cycle.

Correction to Officials on Problems With Russia

MK0903144693

The following correction pertains to the item headlined " Vice Premier, Bank Chairman on Problems With Russia," published in the 9 March Central Eurasia DAILY REPORT, page 33:

Column two, last paragraph of item, sixth sentence, make read: returned only as they are disposed of. (changing "their" to "they")

National Affairs

Plyushch on Constitution, Privatization, Council's Tasks

AU1003093293 Kiev HOLOS UKRAYINY in Ukrainian 5 Mar 93 pp 3, 6

[Report on interview with Ivan Stepanovych Plyushch, chairman of Ukraine's Supreme Council, for the Ukrainian Radio Program "Nezalezhnist" (Independence) and radio listeners in Kiev; date not given: "We Are Building a Democratic Society in Which the Law Must Prevail"]

[Text] A few days ago, chairman of Ukraine's Supreme Council I.S. Plyushch was a guest of the Ukrainian radio program "Nezalezhnist." For one hour, he answered, live, questions asked by a reporter and radio listeners. In view of the topical nature of the conversation, we are offering our readers a report on it.

["Nezalezhnist"] Ivan Stepanovych, the newly elected Supreme Council will soon be three years old. What have these years been like for our state's supreme legislative organ?

[Plyushch] I think that everybody will agree that it has been an extremely complex and dynamic time. Some people will probably object, but I would add this: It was a joyful time for Ukraine.

Is it possible to give an objective assessment of what has been done by Ukraine's supreme legislative organ over these almost three years? It seems to me that, today, nobody can do this—it is impossible. As the popular saying goes, what is big is better seen from a distance. I have in mind distance in terms of time. Whoever tries, today, to offer an unambiguous or, as it were, categorical, assessment of the Supreme Council, is being hasty, to put it mildly.

["Nezalezhnist"] Quantitatively speaking, I would say that enormous amounts of work have been accomplished. What is your assessment of the quality of the laws and decrees that have been adopted? It is no secret that many legal acts have shortcomings or even loopholes for abuse....

[Plyushch] The work of the Supreme Council may be divided into several spheres at least. To take the first, the political sphere, the adopted documents have formed a legislative foundation for building an independent and democratic Ukraine. It is worth pointing out that not one has been appealed against by legislative foundations or other international structures. Nor have there been substantial criticisms of these documents.

Let us take the Declaration of Ukraine's State Sovereignty. You know about the conditions under which it was created. Now, some people are trying to intimidate us with a possible return [as published] to neocommunism; at that time, it was still at its height—the 28th CPSU Congress was in progress. We adopted the Declaration on 16 July 1990—almost unanimously. None of its clauses has, so far, been appealed against and nobody has insisted that it needs to be altered. Now, while preparing legislative acts, we often check them against the Declaration. Let us recall the law on economic independence that helped us struggle for this independence so far back; the Act of Proclamation of Ukraine's Independence; or the package of documents for building our own Armed Forces. I could quote quite a number of other legislative acts without which we would not have been able to accomplish the first stage of political reforms.

However, you have just reminded me that there are laws that enable some people who look for loopholes in the laws to justify their illegal actions to find them. This applies to individual documents adopted for the implementation of radical economic reforms. They are now being sharply criticized and, in my opinion, justly so. When we were adopting the package of those laws, we, in fact, started from a blank sheet and had no experience. I repeatedly said that the documents in question are far from being ideal. Our young state, which has received a difficult legacy, is just one and one-half years old. Over such a stretch of time, nobody has succeeded in creating a perfect legal base for building a national economy or for implementing radical reforms. As one can see, we are not an exception.

It is true that the legislation on economic reforms has sensitive points that some people managed to interpret in their own way and to use for their own mercenary purposes. However, there are organs of executive power and judicial organs that must see to it that there is no abuse of the law.

["Nezalezhnist"] How do you intend to comment upon the details of abuse in Ukrnaftokhim and in the Ministry of External Economic Affairs?

[Plyushch] I intend to say that one should not condemn Ukrnaftokhim or the ministry you mentioned merely on the basis of one or two examples.

I am not afraid to make myself unpopular by asserting that Ukrnaftokhim is a company of the future. The president did the right thing when he signed the edict on its creation. First, it is a nongovernmental structure and, therefore, it is self-sufficient and does not receive any capital from the state budget to keep it going. Second, Ukrnaftokhim had to establish direct ties with oil-extracting industries and use associated [asotsiyovani] forms of the organization of labor.

The fact that Ukraine has a powerful oil refining industry was taken into account. It is capable of processing 62 million tonnes of oil a year, our own needs being 50 million tonnes. Besides, we have everything ready—oil can be delivered through pipelines from Russian oil fields in western Siberia. It might seem to be a good arrangement. We supply the raw material to our oil refineries and enable their collectives to work in a

normal way. Some of the processed petroleum, even 30 percent of it, would remain in Ukraine—this would be useful at a time of energy crisis.

However, you see how Ukrnaftokhim has been discredited. It was declared that individuals there had made tens of millions [monetary unit not specified] and even deposited that money in foreign banks. However, as chairman of the Supreme Council, I did not see a single document confirming this. Certain violations were revealed during inspections. Instead of procuring medicines, they bought some automobiles. Something other than expected was built with the help of the capital that had been earned. Of course, the perpetrators must be held answerable for the violations. However, one should not draw the conclusion that we do not need such a commercial structure at all.

Now about the Ministry of External Economic Affairs. Every developed country has such a ministry. There must be somebody to control what is being imported into a country and what is being exported from it and to forecast future processes. This ministry must do everything possible to promote foreign investments in Ukraine's economy and to establish good business ties with foreign businessmen. The leadership there has been reinforced and many good people with initiative work there. If several officials have failed to resist the temptation of taking bribes, let them be answerable for this. However, labels should not be pinned upon the entire ministry. I would like criticism to be specific and not general. We must not hasten to condemn those structures that were recently created with good intentions.

["Nezalezhnist"] One can hear differing views on the privatization of housing. Some people believe that it is too slow, while others call it "misappropriation"....

[Plyushch] The privatization of housing in Ukraine was started as far back as in 1989 on the decision of the government headed by V.A. Masol. A quite impressive figure is being quoted today. About 350,000 apartments have been privatized through purchasing. It might seem that the process is under way. However, it must be profitable for both the citizens and the state. What do we have in reality? The apartments have been privatized mainly at a negligible price, to put it frankly, for kopecks. Besides, some people, believing that it is their own housing, began to trade in it. Many intermediary companies have been created and a currency market for apartments has emerged. There are cases where those who purchased their apartments quickly sold them and also had their names put on the waiting list to obtain state housing. What have we gained from such privatization, conducted with an imperfect mechanism?

Of course, the government not only had to elaborate a proper mechanism in time, but also to submit it to the Supreme Council to make it law. Moreover, it had to monitor the implementation of such a law. If a certain norm makes it possible to find the loopholes you spoke of, then amendments need to be introduced in order to seal them. However, this was not done. Incidentally, the privatization of housing was carried out by those structures of state power that must protect the interests of both the state and citizens. I mean primarily state administrations and local councils of people's deputies.

["Nezalezhnist"] It is known that some deputies are against the privatization of housing.

[Plyushch] I do not share their opinion. Unless we privatize housing, we will never accomplish economic reform and will never resolve the problem of providing all citizens with housing. I think that it was our mistake when we allowed people to believe that the state would take care of everybody and that all people would get apartments. The construction of private and cooperative housing was hampered. There are many cases in which single people have three- four-, or five-room apartments, and the state covers a considerable part of their costs, whereas large families in the same neighborhood, live in crowded premises. Is this fair?

["Nezalezhnist"] Judging by our mail, the majority of the population supports Leonid Kuchma's government, although there are others who propose that he should resign. What is your opinion?

[Plyushch] When one hears calls for the resignation of the present government, one becomes convinced once again that we cannot get rid of obsolete stereotypes. We only need to find quickly someone at the end of the line and someone to blame. We replaced one government, then yet another. Before the third government had time to begin its work, we can already hear voices that it is no good either! Of course, it is possible to make references to some developed democratic countries where the government is changed every year, while the people do not live at all badly. However, we must not forget that the economy there is developing in accordance with economic laws, and society there is stable. Changes in government or in other power structures there do not have a noticeable effect upon life in those countries. At the same time, our economy is in such a state that the government must constantly control it and not let things take their own course.

I think that it is premature to make an assessment of the government that has been headed by Leonid Kuchma for just two or three months. We can see that he is trying to take control of the situation during this difficult period and to influence the state of affairs. The government is already making actual steps and is doing much in order to halt the decline in production. I believe that it is necessary to be patient and help the government in implementing economic reforms, since the results will not only depend upon this, but also upon all of us. I think that, in May, after the government reports on its activities, the additional powers that the Supreme Council has given to the government for half a year will be extended at least until the end of the year.

[Radio listener] When will we have a new Constitution and what is your attitude toward proposals by some

political parties that a constitutional assembly rather than the Supreme Council should adopt it?

[Plyushch] We should not rush into adopting a Constitution, because it is the main law of the state. It must be such that even in 10 or 20 years it should conform to the needs of the people. A working group has now prepared a new variant of the Constitution taking into account the overwhelming majority of critical remarks and proposals that were received during its nationwide discussion. After a certain analysis and further elaboration by the Constitutional Commission, it will be submitted to the Supreme Council for discussion.

Who must adopt the Constitution? Some people are trying to prove that the present Supreme Council cannot do this, and that some constitutional assembly or another structure will cope with the task. Who will elect that assembly? What will be its composition? Will it be prepared to adopt a new Constitution? If we take into account political motivations, some of the opponents may think that precisely their forces will be represented in the assembly and they will adopt a Constitution that would suit them. Others do not lose hope that they will obtain more seats in the constitutional assembly. I think that Article 97 of the current Constitution states clearly: "Ukraine's Supreme Council is exclusively authorized to adopt Ukraine's Constitution and to introduce changes into it...." As long as this article remains in force, it would be illegal to propose anything else.

[N. Ivanova, B. Saliy, and T. Botsul] Will a Constitutional Court be created?

[Plyushch] I think that we need a Constitutional Court. However, how can it be formed and recognized by all sides in an atmosphere of such political confrontation? As you see, this problem is extremely complicated. However, we adopted the Law on the Constitutional Court and discussed candidates for its membership. The majority of people's deputies wanted this. Should the minority be given the right to block the fulfillment of the decision?

I want to draw your attention to one detail. A certain lawyer was heard to say that the Constitutional Court is, allegedly, an organ that is above both the Supreme Council and the president. This is absolutely wrong. There is no such organ that would be above the Supreme Council or the president. The Supreme Council is a supreme legislative organ, and voters alone are above it. The president today is chairman of the executive power and head of state elected by the people. Voters can decide whether he is good or not. At the same time, the Constitutional Court can only make a conclusion as to whether the Constitution or a particular law are violated.

In view of what happened at the Supreme Council when it tried to form a Constitutional Court, I believe that further discussion of this question needs to be postponed. However, what has already been voted for has the force of law, and we will not be given up.

[S.A. Khomenko, pensioner from Kiev] Ivan Stepanovych, recent meetings of the session have shown that the bloc of Communists is alive and you are siding with them.... The road to communism is the end. Be wise. Remain with your ill-fated people.

[Plyushch] Sofiya Andriyivna, I received even sharper notes. "Have you been bought by the Communist mafia?" reads one of them. "It makes our flesh creep when we try to imagine that communist structures may be restored." I fully share the anxiety of such people, anxiety that has also been voiced by Sofiya Andriyivna Khomenko. God forbid our returning to the past. Then it will start again: "Who is with us? Who is against us?... The consequences will be terrible.

However, there are also people who are afraid of ultranationalist manifestations. Because, today, one can already hear: We will soon see which is which and will soon take the law into our own hands!... You know, the party of which I was a member for more than thirty years, and I am not concealing it, had 3 million of Ukraine's citizens in its ranks. Who will then be their judges?

These questions must be dealt with very carefully and without any rush. I think that the Supreme Council will adopt a decision in accordance with which our citizens cannot be considered criminals simply for having been members of the CPSU or Ukraine's Communist Party. Second, in view of the fact that it was not a parliamentary type of party, but an administrative-command state structure, it will not be restored nor will its property be restored to anyone. Third, those citizens of Ukraine who believe in the "socialist method of production and in communist orientation" have the right to be members of the communist party, but of a newly created one that would conform to the current legislation. We are building a democratic and rule-of-law state and, therefore, we must act accordingly.

[V.S. Ivanov, Kiev] Where do you, Ivan Stepanovych, personally see a way out of the crisis that has arisen in the parliament?

[Plyushch] I will say this: Thank God, there is still no crisis in the Supreme Council. There is an exacerbation of the political struggle. It did not start without reason. In states of the former USSR, attempts are being made to restore communist party structures and to return to the old times—to the Union. It must be admitted that this is the situation. That is why democratic forces are so suspicious about what is happening. However, this does not mean that we must resort to placing obstacles before them or making groundless objections. The Supreme Council has not yet submitted for consideration a single question or a single draft law that would cancel a particular norm concerning the building of an independent and democratic Ukraine.

Realizing my personal responsibility, I, as chairman of the Supreme Council, will do everything to enable the

continuation of its work in accordance with the Constitution. The present exacerbation of the political situation is very dangerous. We must remember that the Supreme Council alone can stabilize our society.

[I.A. Turko, Kiev] The Supreme Council is adopting increasing numbers of laws, but life is getting worse. Is it necessary to continue issuing more laws?

[Plyushch] In view of the present socioeconomic situation, you, Ivan Artemovych, have every reason to make such a remark. We can be sharply criticized for the fact that some of the legislative acts turned out to be far from perfect or cannot be implemented. Today, we have already spoken about this. However, I want to point out that a democratic society is a society governed by laws. If the majority of our population had been inclined to return to the administrative-command system, where persons rule, then perhaps there would not be any need for laws. We are advancing toward a democratic world and have opted for such a road. True democracy prevails only where there is a rule of law.

Therefore, criticize us deputies also for the failure to adopt many laws that our society needs. It is difficult to divide them into principal and subordinate. We used to hear the following complaints: Does not the Supreme Council have anything better to do than to prepare a law on veterinary medicine or on archival matters? However, it is people who work in archives, and they need a legal foundation. As regards veterinary medicine, it would be a mistake to believe that it is such a simple and unimportant matter. Once we became a state, laws were needed for every branch and for all elements of social life. We have not yet adopted all of them—this is our sin.

[L.G. Bratko] When will an end be put to exporting goods from Ukraine and to profiteering in goods manufactured by state enterprises?

[Plyushch] I think, Larysa Hryhorivna, that the export of goods from Ukraine will never be put to an end. On the contrary, I would like an increasing amount of goods to be exported abroad and, accordingly, an increasingly large flow of products to be imported to us from there, products that the people need. It would indicate that the country is becoming wealthier and is finding a road to the world market; it would also signify that the economic community recognizes it. I believe that some day it will be so.

However, I understand your anxiety. What you mean is the disordered and uncontrolled removal of large amounts of goods, when some individuals keep lining their pockets, whereas the common people only become more impoverished. It cannot continue like this. The government is now taking measures to put an end to such operations. A number of decrees have been adopted for putting things in order.

With regard to profiteering in goods, it can only be overcome by increasing their production. As long as the decline in production continues, speculation will not diminish either, no matter how much we might struggle against it....

[P.S. Petrovych] I think that the Supreme Council, the president, and the government must conduct a more active struggle against crime, especially against the mafia and corruption.

I quite agree with you. Recently, the Supreme Council adopted a number of legal acts aimed at intensifying the struggle against crime and introduced necessary amendments and additions to the current legislation. At plenary sessions, it was analyzed how the decisions on these questions adopted by the Supreme Council are being fulfilled. A commission of deputies has been created for combating organized crime and corruption. A few days ago, the government held a conference with the participation of leaders of all structures of law-enforcement organs. Particularly acute was the question of what needs to be done in order to improve the crime-breeding situation. However, as you can see, things are not that simple.

Here is yet another note: "Why cannot thieves be caught red-handed and the illicit gains be returned to the people?" I could quote large figures illustrating how many people have been "caught red-handed" and how many billions of karbovantsi have been returned to the state and to the people. However, this is only a small part of what has been stolen and misappropriated. Unfortunately, we had such a society in which some people stole, while others, who were bosses or close to bosses simply "took." This continued for many years, because everything was "ours," but, in fact, "nobody's." If there had been an owner and if everything had been "mine," then it would have been impossible to steal from oneself. Conversely, if everything is somebody's, there is a corresponding attitude.

In the conditions that have arisen the struggle that we are waging against crime is obviously insufficient. We will not overcome crime if organs of power or law-enforcement engage in this struggle alone. However, if the people get down to this in a serious manner, we will overcome it. Take trade unions—the most numerous public organization uniting about 26 million people. If members of trade unions and their leaders, defending social justice, would oppose corruption and the mafia, then, I am sure, the situation would be much better.

[V.V. Yevdokymov, deputy director of the Odessa crane-building plant] We have recently felt an intensified interference in enterprises' affairs. Barriers are being created on the road to the market. What is your attitude toward this?

[Plyushch] In a word, negative.

[V.V. Ostapenko, Kiev] Will Ukraine, as an independent state, achieve a normal and civilized standard of living? How much time will it need?

[Plyushch] Ukraine has full potential for achieving its independence and for developing its national economy. This is not only our opinion. This has also been corroborated by authoritative experts in international legal, economic, and financial structures. However, first and foremost, we need a system that would create conditions enabling everybody to work for himself. Then Ukraine will gradually become wealthy. How much time do we need for that? This is very difficult to predict. I think that it will not take long before we realize that we can live better. In my opinion, the process of stabilization will start within the next two years.

When will we achieve a more or less normal standard of living? I will quote the following example. For already three years, following the unification of Germany, attempts have been made to raise the standard of living in its eastern lands to the level prevailing in the West. For this purpose, more than DM100 billion in investments are made every year. Notwithstanding this, the decline in production has not yet been halted there, and last year unemployment reached 30 percent. Well, if the Germans believe that they need another seven to ten years to adjust their economy and living conditions, for us 10 years will certainly not be enough to rise to the German level.

[Ya.H. Yatsenko, Tarashcha in Kiev Oblast] They say that Russia wants to turn off our gas. How will we survive? We have only recently started to receive it.

[Plyushch] Do not worry, Yakov Havrylovych. I cannot even imagine that we may fail to come to an agreement with Russia and with other states and leave Ukraine without gas. It is good that you received it. Use it as long as the gas is available in the deposits of Russia, Turkmenistan, or Ukraine....

[H.I. Kondratovych and I.S. Sonkina] Will the question of the free use of transport by pensioners be resolved?

[Plyushch] We would very much like to resolve it immediately. However, this is a question that requires consideration in terms of the state budget. I think that, in March, the Supreme Council will discuss the budget. Then the question of the right to free use of transport by pensioners will be resolved.

There were also other telephone calls to the radio studio with various questions and wishes. At the end, a note that had been dictated by V.Kh. Chokhan from Kiev was passed: "We wish you, Ivan Stepanovych, every success. Our whole family supports you. We wish you health and happiness!"

Rukh Leader Threatens To Walk Out on Legislature

WS1003105593 Kiev KYYIVSKA PRAVDA in Ukrainian 19 Feb 93 p 1

[Report on interview with Rukh Chairman Vyacheslav Chornovil by P. Vasyanovych: "Again Hand-To-Hand Combat"]

[Text] [Vasyanovych] And again, it was not clear whether the presence of the People's Council in the legislature yesterday was physical or rather spiritual. But what is sure is that it did not register, so I.S. Plyushch announced a joint legislative commission meeting instead of a plenary one. He also asked the journalists to report that the usual number of deputies, 350-360, appeared as well as to explain the lack of quorum by the fact that 70-75 of them deliberately did not register. So, we are fulfilling his request.

The absence of television put the deputies at ease. As Mr. Marchenko, a Socialist, said, one can sound really harsh now, which is what he promptly did to his opponents. In the meantime, we asked V.M. Chornovil, Rukh's chairman, to comment on the situation that has recently taken shape in the legislature and the position of the People's Council, in particular.

[Chornovil] The legislative crisis is caused by an attempt by the majority to carry out a quiet reversal of the past, said Vyacheslav Maksymovych. And this is already the second attempt. In January, the conservative majority tried to oust reform-minded ministers from the government and then perhaps Kuchma himself. And now they are out to thrust upon us the Constitutional Court, to which even candidates proposed by the president were not elected. It is anyone's guess how conservative this body, the highest constitutional power, will be. This court is capable of blocking the president's and the government's decisions. Besides, what Constitutional Court can you talk about when the new Constitution has not yet been crafted, and the old one is coming apart at the seams.

To make things worse, persistent attempts are made to strip the opposition of whatever little rights it has—the capability to block the legislative decisions on major issues. If we are intent on building a civilized state and want to have a full-fledged legislation, we cannot have a cardboard opposition.

[Vasyanovych] So what tactics will you have now?

[Chornovil] We will seek at any cost the postponement of the discussion of the Constitutional Court issue. The opposition can also try to change the Provisional Regulations [tymchasovyy reglament] so as to defend its rights or walk out on the legislation, with its members retaining their legislative status.

[Vasyanovych] The situation is indeed critical. How would you assess it against the backdrop of the current developments in Kiev—a strike of the transportation workers, which all but paralyzed the entire city?

[Chornovil] This strike is absolutely inconsequential today, which we expressed in the Rukh's declaration. Incidentally, from what I know, this strike was instigated by an official trade union, belonging to pro-communist, anti-state forces benefiting from the destabilization of the situation in Ukraine. We are sympathetic with simple transportation workers and are aware of their

problems. But they are not the only ones that have found themselves in this situation today. This is why, condemning the strike, we would not like to see the crackdown actions of Saliy and his administration aimed at the rank and file workers. It is the leadership, which has provoked the people to resort to this measure, that should bear the main responsibility for consequences of this strike.

[Vasyanovych] In the meantime, the legislation, thinned out and resembling rather a meeting of deputies, went about discussing a land issue. I.S. Plyushch argued that under the circumstances, the law regulating the buying and selling the land should not be approved, otherwise this will repeat the case of privatization of apartments. The society is not yet ready, said Ivan Stepanovych.

And in this situation, it will not be ready for quite a while, we may add.

Vice Premier Confirms Chernobyl To Close in 1993

LD1003104693 Kiev Radio Ukraine World Service in Ukrainian 0600 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Text] The Chernobyl AES will be closed down in 1993. This decision made by the Supreme Council in 1991 was confirmed by First Vice Prime Minister Ihor Yukhnovskyy. He proposed creating an international scientific test site in the 30 km zone. In the opinion of experts, the primary task in eliminating the aftereffects of the 1986 accident is to remove the ecological stresses in people. It was reported at an international conference on this problem which took place in Moscow in February that the UNESCO program envisages the creation of centers in Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia for the psychological rehabilitation of people who suffered from radiation.

Restrictions Placed on Export of Some Raw Materials

LD1003105493 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1038 GMT 10 Mar 93

[By UKRINFORM for TASS]

[Text] Kiev March 10 TASS—The Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers has endorsed a list of types of raw and other materials, equipment and technologies that can be used for the development of weapons, military and special-purpose hardware.

These will be exported only by a special permission from competent state agencies.

The list includes, in particular, some metals and minerals, fissionable materials, chemical inhibitors, petroleum products, individual types of machine tools, machining, electrical and power equipment, and missile technologues.

Congress of Sevastopol Ukrainians To Meet 28 Mar

OW0903180993 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1456 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The main goal of the 28 March session of the Congress of Ukrainians of Sevastopol is to find a path to cooperation between different social organizations and people of various nationalities in the Crimean Peninsula, according to a statement by the Congress's organizing committee which was released on Monday 8 March. The statement emphasizes, in particular, that the Ukrainians of Sevastopol wish to attain mutual understanding, "even with organizations holding anti-Ukrainian positions."

Supporters of Crimean unifications with Russia are opposed to the holding of the Congress, as are the Sevastopol branch of the National Salvation Front, the Russian-speaking movement of the Crimea, and others. As yet no location has been named for the meeting.

Belarus

Kebich Views CIS, Other Issues at News Conference

OW0903172493 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1601 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Report by Andrey Pershin, Andrey Petrovskiy, and Vladimir Shishlin; edited by Boris Grishchenko; from the "Presidential Bulletin" feature—following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kebich will have a meeting with heads of local administrations on March 18 at which he is planning to speak about his proposal for creating a new economic union within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Mentioning this at a news conference in Minsk on Tuesday [9 March], he did not specify, however, what functions the new structure would have. He said he had discussed the matter with parliament chairman Stanislav Shushkevich and National Bank chairman Stanislav Bogdankevich. At the same meeting, he is going to state his position on the military aspect of the republic's proclaimed course towards political neutrality. "If we continue this course, in two years' time our army will be unable to defend the state," he said.

Kebich said he had signed a document on Tuesday introducing a new exchange rate for the Belarusian noncash ruble against the Russian ruble. One hundred Russian rubles will from now on be worth 130 Belarusian rubles. There are also plans to introduce new exchange rates for the Belarusian ruble against the currencies of Ukraine and some other republics of the former Soviet Union. The Prime Minister advocated the introduction of a general evaluation system for all monetary units existing in the CIS. Belarus is not going to leave the ruble zone, he said, but the bilateral clearing accounts system used within the Commonwealth is "ousting the republic from the single monetary area." Kebich is shortly going to visit Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and then Lithuania and Latvia. He made it clear that the aim of his trip to Kazakhstan is to solve the grain supplies problem with that republic. Kazakhstan, he said, is behind schedule with its wheat supplies to Belarus, thus violating their agreement. His visit to Ukraine will be "consultative" in character, he said. In his view, Ukrainian leaders have lately "changed their tone," which gives Kebich reason to assume that "the two countries no longer have any obstacles to solving any of their mutual problems."

On April 1 and 2, Kebich will be visiting Germany. Pointing out that Belarus has closer economic contacts with that country than with any other European nation, he said Belarus should obtain credits from Germany and other countries by renting real estate to them.

Further on News Conference

LD0903175593 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1444 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] We are all concentrating our attention on the upcoming congress in Moscow, quite naturally, but there are no less important events going on in the other CIS states. The prime minister of Belarus held a news conference today in Minsk, for example, at which some significant things were said. Our correspondent Petr Mokritskiy was among the journalists present. Here he is:

[Mokritskiy] Good evening. Belarus Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kebich, on his first day back after illness, met with the media today. One cannot say that he was away from work for two months, because even while he was recuperating he was still in touch.

At the news conference he said that he had held a meeting today with Supreme Soviet Chairman Shushkevich, First Deputy Chairman Kuznetsov, and National Bank Chairman Bogdankevich. They decided to introduce a valuation rate [otsenochnyy koeffitsiyent] for the National Bank's accounting unit [rashchetnaya yedinitsa] to the Russian ruble. The reason for this, he explained, is difficulties with the settlement and credit system. Money is not coming in and payment authorities are delaying. This will primarily affect financial relations between Russia and Belarus but also between all suppliers of products throughout the CIS.

According to this decision, the rate is set as follows: for 130 Belarus rubles we will get 100 Russian rubles.

[Begin Kebich recording] We have proposed something similar to a group of other CIS countries. We are waiting for their answers, and we expect that they will also bring in a system of accounting units [otsenochnaya valyuta], so to speak, for dealings between Belarus and each of them. Once this has been done, enterprises will in the future use them only at currency exchanges, and I want to make it clear that this will apply only to rubles in noncash form. Cash will be treated exactly as before, and there will be no new rates of exchange applied to it. But paper transactions will work like this: An enterprise receives the money, it goes to a currency exchange, and at that exchange at a rate of, I repeat, 130:100 it buys Russian or Belarus money depending on what it needs. This is a new system that we are bringing in today, but we have no other option so we are trying it out to see how it works. [end recording]

Vyacheslav Kebich expressed concern over the uncontrollable rise of prices for energy and power, leading to rises in food and goods prices. As he put it, he has on his desk a whole package of documents with proposed measures to protect various groups within society, pensioners probably first of all.

The republic is having difficulties with power resources but the sowing of crops will go ahead because there is gasoline and all oil products have been redirected to agriculture.

And one more thing: Vyacheslav Kebich is to visit Russia soon, then Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Lithuania, and Latvia. As he said, this is a consultative trip. The aim is to establish a new economic union.

After that, the prime minister read a statement in his name addressed to the procurator general of the Republic of Belarus:

[Begin Kebich recording] To Vasiliy Ivanovich Shaladonov, Procurator general of the Republic of Belarus. Statement. Certain media organizations, in particular the Moscow newspapers KOMMERSANT-DAILY and NARODNAYA GAZETA and also the Mayak radio station and Ostankino TV Novosti programs, have recently printed or broadcast reports that quote sources close to the Interior Ministry and other law enforcement agencies claiming that relatives of mine are involved in unseemly affairs, particularly the acceptance of bribes and so on.

I categorically reject such allegations and regard them as an attempt to blacken my and my family's name and thus cast a shadow on the Government of Belarus. The reasons for and the sources of such slanders are well known to me. Behind all of this stand people who wish to discredit the government's policy gradually to reform the economy and social welfare, people who wish to destroy the stability that the republic enjoys. They are resorting to dirty political tricks.

I view such actions as dangerous to our state and in this connection I request the republican procuracy to verify the reports being circulated and to act in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Belarus. [end recording]

That was the statement that Vyacheslav Kebich made and he expects to receive a reply from the republican procuracy before the Belarus Supreme Soviet session. And it will be our duty, obviously, to report on the result of the investigation.

Government, Bank Create Council for Monetary Issues

WS1003112093 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 0605 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Report from "At the Council of Ministers" program]

[Text] According to a joint decision of the government and the National Bank, the Council for Monetary Circulation, Credits, and Currency Regulation has been established. It has been created to help improve the credit and currency policy, directed to achieve the stability of the Belarusian monetary unit at home and abroad, and to stabilize prices. The council will consult the government and the National Bank on how to carry out the credit and currency policy, and introduce timely corrections taking into consideration the state of the national economy and inflation rates. The council is headed by National Bank Chairman Stanislav Bagdankevich.

Adopt Resolution on Payments Regulation

WS1003103593 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 0400 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Text] A joint resolution of the government and the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus on regulating mutual payments with former USSR republics, comes into effect on 10 March. Non-cash rubles, national currencies of the republics, and their exchange rates towards Belarusian non-cash rubles will be used for trade operations. The resolution envisions the creation at the National Bank of the state reserve fund of the currencies of the former USSR republics. Enterprises and organizations possessing non-cash Russian rubles deposited in commercial banks, are obliged to convert them into Belarusian non-cash rubles at the National Bank over a period of one month beginning 10 March. The exchange rate will be determined by the stock exchange. Otherwise, Russian ruble accounts at commercial banks will be frozen. All-Republican mutual clearing operations will start on 30 March. They will be carried out according to the situation existing on 1 March. We recommend that managers treat this event with responsibility.

National Bank Refuses Payments to Ukraine, Other States

LD0903221193 Minsk Radiostantsiya Belarus International Service in Belarusian 1900 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] The National Bank of Belarus announced the other day that sales by our enterprises of their produce to Ukraine are now considered to be charitable aid because payment settlements with that republic have been stopped. After the Ukrainian debt to our republic has reached almost 59 billion rubles and Ukrainian bankers carry on pretending that it does not concern them at all, the National Bank has dared to take the following measure: not to pay for the goods delivered by the neighbors but to count them toward paying off the debt. Similar actions are being taken in relation to Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Georgia.

Control Chamber Reveals Violations, Prevents Arms Shipment

WS1003144593 Minsk BELINFORM in Russian 1310 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] Speaking at a meeting with Control Chamber personnel, Supreme Soviet Chairman Stanislav Shushkevich said: "We have committed a grave mistake by the temporary ban on the organs of economic control. This hasty decision has caused heavy losses to the Republic. To compensate for them the controllers will have to work hard."

The chairman expressed his confidence in the fact that not everything had been lost. The results of the activity of the new supreme organ of state financial and economic control testify to it. The controllers have revealed violations in the use of budget allocations, currency resources, and republican and local budgets worth 800 million rubles [R]. Infringements connected with state

property privatization comprise a considerable part of these violations. They have inflicted heavy losses to the state. It has been confirmed by an inspection of the legality of state property transfers to private owners, carried out by the controllers on behalf of the Supreme Soviet.

In Grodno Oblast alone, R400 million worth of state property has been privatized, property worth R22 million—with violations of the law.

Shipment of arms and military equipment out of the Republic, worth R200 million in 1991 prices, was halted after the Control Chamber's motion. These figures concern the Koloskovo arsenal alone.

The professionalism and competence of the Chamber personnel have been evaluated by foreign specialists. The Republican Control Chamber has become a member of the International Organization of Supreme Control Organs, which brings together 129 countries. The issue of the Republican Control Chamber joining the European Organization of Supreme Control Organs will be considered in April in Prague.

Committee Chairman Comments on Military Doctrine

WS1003113693 Minsk RESPUBLIKA in Russian 17 Feb 93 pp 1, 3

[Article by Rozia Tokhta-Khodzhaeva under the "The Army and People" rubric: "Our Deputies Have Protected People's Defenders by Law"]

[Text] The ninth Supreme Council session will go down in the history of the Belarusian Armed Forces. For the first time in our history, the principles of the state military policy and the relations between the state and servicemen were legitimized.

During a relatively short period—less than a year—members of the legislature's Commission for National Security, Defense, and Crime together with experts and specialists from the Defense Ministry elaborated the legal basis for military construction and a program of social protection for servicemen and their families. RESPUBLIKA has asked Mechislav Ivanovich Grib, chairman of the Supreme Council Committee for National Security, Defense, and Crime, to speak on the issue of protecting the vital interests of both servicemen on active duty and those who have been discharged from the Army:

Among the 24 documents that have been elaborated by the commission and adopted by the legislature, I would like to highlight the package of military laws. To tell you the truth, it was difficult for me to report on these issues at the session, especially when the topic of discussion was the social protection of our servicemen and their families. However, it is natural because the issues are connected with material costs. The laws on defense, Armed Forces, statute of servicemen, universal military service, from the Army, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Committee for State Security were adopted. The session also adopted the law on alternative service in the first reading.

The basic document is the military doctrine. It is very unique because it is the first in Belarusian history and was elaborated during a period when the country had no enemies. Of course, it can be adjusted in the future. This doctrine declares the statements of the Declaration of Sovereignty stating the neutral, nonnuclear, and defensive character of our policy. We are not going to start a war against anybody; our Armed Forces are required for our own defense. We will have adopted the general plan for their reorganization by late 1995. We believe that our Armed Forces will be composed of 75,000 servicemen.

The main laws were adopted without any counteraction from the side of the opposing factions. Two laws—on the servicemen's statute and pensions for the discharged servicemen—have resulted in much discussion. It has a simple explanation: We would like to have a strong army equipped with modern techniques but nobody wants to pay the costs. That is why we doubt the expediency of the Army at all.

My personal opinion is that the Armed Forces is a complicated structure which is easy to destroy but difficult to revive. Unfortunately, some deputies do not share our opinion. Nevertheless, our version was adopted. In particular, the deputies adopted the commission's decision on providing officers with housing and on its free transfer to those officers who have served more than 20 years. Issues of insurance were also solved.

Currently, the officers who have been discharged into the reserves without housing are in the most difficult situation. The construction of the housing by the state is not being carried out in a timely manner. It goes without saying that their lawful demands will be satisfied because all the privileges for active servicemen are also extended to the discharged Army personnel.

Our legislature has also adopted our proposal of discharging the servicemen into the reserves after 15 years of service on grounds of redundancy. This measure is temporary, only for the period of Army reform. A 40 percent pension is not a big sum, but nevertheless it can help an officer survive through hard times, and in any case it is better than nothing. I cannot admit that the package of military laws was emasculated. Most of our proposals were adopted. I admit, however, that there will be difficulties with getting credits for individual building. The Cabinet of Ministers has been authorized to implement the adopted laws.

Speaking about the privileges, I would like to talk about the law on universal military service. Belarus is the only republic which grants a service delay for a young man who studies at a technical school and a higher education establishment. When we submitted this proposal to the Supreme Council, we bore in mind the idea that a break in studies is detrimental both to the young man and to

the state. Currently, the conscription plan is 80 percent fulfilled. Combat duty and guarding are now performed by officers and warrant officers. But we have no other way out. I am sure that the Army reorganization will bring some changes.

Conscripts with few children or from a family of invalids also have privileges.

At the end of the session, the deputies adopted the law on alternative service. There were some conflicting opinions about it. The Cabinet of Ministers refused to submit this draft law to the Supreme Council, so our commission had to do it.

We proceeded from the opinion that we cannot sue a person who is unwilling to serve in the Army due to his religious views. The term of alternative service should be lengthy. They will work in hospitals and in homes for invalids and the aged. A commission for alternative service will be organized in the nearest future.

In our view, financial and material support for the mllitary and alternative services should be the same, but the length of service and its difficulty should differ. The Supreme Council took into account the complexity of the issue and deemed it necessary to redraft the law in a year.

The most difficult issue both for us and the deputies was the law on pensions for servicemen. Some deputies considered that pensions should be equal for all citizens, but we managed to convince them that those with military service were a special case. We were also supported by the international law which differentiates between pensions for civilians and servicemen. To our credit, we did not cause our servicemen's financial situation to deteriorate in comparison with the USSR legislation. Currently, our law is the most advanced among the former USSR republics.

The law foresees payments to the families of deceased servicemen, including the families of soldiers who have suffered during military training. Losses in personnel are inevitable. We cannot avoid them. The issue is how to treat these losses: as accidents or deaths at war. The Supreme Council chose the second variant which anticipates the paying of 250 minimum salaries to the family of the deceased, irrespective of his rank. Compensations for woundings and injuries in the line of duty are also anticipated.

The laws on statute and pensions for servicemen also extend to the border troop personnel.

In general, our commission is contented with the deputies' attitude toward these complicated issues of the Defense Ministry. The most important thing is to develop the young Belarusian Army and to solve its social problems. I consider it expedient to publish the most important military laws in the republican newspapers.

Russian Pilots Refuse To Leave Over Housing Problem

LD0903194493 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 0400 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] Some 497 Russian officers from the Lida Aviation Division, which was transferred last summer to the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation, have refused to be redeployed to Russian territory.

According to Leonid (Sevalov), deputy chairman of the parliamentary commission for issues of national security, defense, and crime fighting, the main reason for the Russian pilots' refusal to leave Belarus is not a political matter but a purely social one: the impossibility of obtaining accommodation. In order to relve this situation, a special commission has been set up consisting of representatives of the Belarusian parliament as well as the Defense Ministries of Russia and Belarus.

Moldova

Dniester Democrats Oppose Russian 'Nationalist Forces'

LD0903111893 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1000 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] Democrats of the Dniester region are against taking the line of Russian procommunist and nationalist forces. In a statement issued today, they note that recently there were numerous visits to Tiraspol by open and irreconcilable enemies of the Russian Government. The statement issued by the executive committee of the Democratic Party of the Dniester region underlines that taking the course that had already led to an impasse would exclude the possibility of solving the Dniester region problem in a peaceful and dignified manner.

Tajikistan

Rakhmonov Continues Visit to China

LD0903165893 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 1500 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Report from China by unidentified correspondent; from the "Novosti" newscast]

[Text] The first foreign trip of Imamali Rakhmonov, Tajikistan head of state, is to China. There are numerous reasons for that: a mutual border between the two countries, mutual economic interests, ethnic affinity with Tajiks living on Chinese territory who have their own autonomous area, as well as the desire to learn about the experience of the Chinese reforms. Relations between China and Tajikistan were traditionally friendly when the republic was part of the Union.

During its visit to China the Tajikistan delegation intends to go back to the implementation of scheduled projects. A number of agreements have been signed in Beijing, including a political document on the principles of relations between the two countries, as well as economic protocols touching on questions of broad cooperation and protection of investment. China will give Tajikistan a trade credit.

Documents Signed

LD0903192293 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1906 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Nabi Karimov and Pavel Spirin for KHOVAR news agency]

[Text] Beijing March 9 TASS—The Chinese leadership showed today its solidarity with the official Dushanbe plans to finally normalize the republican situation in the near future.

The Chinese Government supports efforts of the Tajik Government to protect national independence and sovereignty, establish peace and stability on republican territory, says a joint declaration on fundamental principles of Tajik-Chinese mutual understanding.

The declaration was signed in Beijing by Tajik Supreme Soviet Chairman Imamali Rakhmonov and Chinese leader Yang Shangkun. On its part, Dushanbe recognized the Chinese Government as the only legitimate government of the entire China, and Taiwan as its inseparable part, with which the Tajik side will not establish official contacts.

In addition to the declaration, the sides signed nine documents on cooperation, including a number of intergovernmental agreements on granting Tajikistan a 30 million yuan goods credit, mutual protection of investments and air communication between the two capitals via Urumqi—the administrative center of the Chinese Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. An agreement was reached on cooperation between the two countries' foreign ministries.

Commenting on the completion of the Chinese visit working part, Rakhmonov said the Tajik-Chinese relations were given a strong impetus and a solid basis for their development has been created.

On the same day he told Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Secretary General Jiang Zemin Tajikistan plans to study the experience of Chinese reforms and Beijing policy of openness.

The Chinese-Tajik relations are rooted in ancient times. Tajik independence, same as the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations opened broad prospects for the two states, said Jiang Zemin.

At night Rakhmonov left for the Nantong economic zone, Jiangsu Province, after which he will head for Shanghai, the Chinese major industrial and financial center.

Minister Seeks Closer Relations With Russia

LD0903163893 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1559 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS diplomatic correspondent]

[Text] Moscow March 9 TASS—"Relations with CIS nations and primarily with Russia are Tajikistan's priority concern. I am referring not only to economic, social and political relations, but to spiritual ties, too," Tajik Foreign Minister Rashid Alimov told the "DIPLOMATIC COURIER", a new ITAR-TASS publication.

"The human rights problem exists in the republic, just as it is present everywhere, including America and France, for instance," the minister added. "The human rights problem should be distinguished as a state approach, state policy and an everyday occurrence. Violence breeds violence. Any action always meets counteraction. Hence, we are categorically opposed to any vengeance. We are not a government of revenge, primarily because we have not come to power with the help of bayonets. Not everything is running smoothly in our republic, many things are going wrong, but we are only at the beginning of our road. Human rights are being violated at the grass roots, but this is not due to the official policy pursued by the government now in office."

Asked about the republic's attitude to Islamic fundamentalism, Alimov noted that the concept of fundamentalism, the more so Islamic fundamentalism, has still to be defined. There are liberal, radical and reactionary wings in any religion, in any confession. The reactionary wing certainly exists and this cannot be denied. But the forms it assumes is quite another point. They should in no case be identified with the ordinary people, who adhere to the Islamic religion as a whole."

"For us, Islam is more a way of life than a religion, despite the fact that attempts were made to suppress it during the period of communist ideology," Alimov noted. According to the minister, after two or three years of Islamic renaissance in Tajikistan, a decline of the church is now being observed. It was caused by those "who wanted to rally the people around the banner of the Islam. They are to blame for the fact that people are now turning away from the church. If you believe in something, it is not for the sake of somebody that you are doing it. Faith for the sake of oneself has survived. Therefore, it is incorrect to speak about the threat of Islamic fundamentalism in this context. There is another danger—the danger that Islamic values will be used to achieve selfish goals, in particular, to seize power by force."

Prime Minister Views Efforts To Stabilize Situation

LD0903172193 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1450 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] Moscow, 9 Mar—"We are not a government seeking revenge. We want to stabilize the situation by political and peaceful means," Tajik Prime Minister Abdumalik Abdullodzhanov says in an interview published in the latest edition of NOVOYE VREMYA magazine. The prime minister sees it as his main task to normalize the situation in the republic. He stresses the need to create the republic's own armed forces and a reliable cover for CIS state borders on the Tajik-Afghan section of the border. The Tajik prime minister says he is certain that an accord on joint measures for the protection of the Tajik-Afghan border attained during the talks with Russia and other members of the CIS, who are participants in a collective security treaty, will help to seal off the illegal channels of arms supplies and drug smuggling from Afghanistan.

Describing the situation in Tajikistan, the republic's prime minister notes that the civil war has led the country to the brink of total catastrophe. The economic reforms aim for a radical privatization and [word indistinct] of state property.

In Abdumalik Abdullodzhanov's view, the dominating view in society is that Tajikistan should keep its secular system. Except for 5 or 6 percent of citizens, the republic's population does not accept any ideas of national isolationism or Islamic statehood.

Concerning Tajikistan's external links, the prime minister singles out as a priority the strengthening of interstate relations within the framework of the CIS and above all with Russia, "a major world power, the backbone of our Commonwealth."

Thanks CIS for Help

LD0903215693 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2049 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By TAJIK KHOVAR news agency correspondent for TASS]

[Text] Dushanbe March 9 TASS—Tajik government head Abdumalik Abdullodzhanov has thanked Commonwealth states for their efficient assistance in consolidation of the border.

The premier told today's meeting with construction heads border troops from some CIS states have arrived in the republic and began to protect the border.

Vice Premier on Operation Against Opposition Forces

LD1003100093 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0929 GMT 10 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent]

[Text] Dushanbe March 10 TASS—Briefing local and foreign journalists here today, Vice-Chairman of the Tajik Council of Ministers Munavarsho Nazriyev categorically ruled out the possibility of guerrilla warfare being waged by armed opposition gangs in the foothills of the Pamir range. The briefing was devoted to Nazriyev's recent trip to the highland districts of Tajikistan.

The vice-premier stressed that those areas were completedly cleared of opposition forces during a large-scale operation launched by government troops there a short while ago.

"Scattered gangs tried to fight their way to the district centre of Jirgatal, neighbouring on Kyrgyzstan. However, some of them were encircled and captured by Tajik Government forces, while the others were prevented from breaking into Kyrgyz territory by the military authorities of Kyrgyzstan," Nazriyev noted. "At present, separate gangs have found shelter in the mountains. However, it will take but a few days to neutralise and disarm them," he added. In his opinion, most of the local population refuses to support the militants and to hide them. "People are sick and tired of the senseless war and they want peace and tranquility on their land. This is why they accept with understanding the policy of the country's new leadership, which is endeavouring to stop the fratricidal war and to promote national reconciliation in Tajikistan. At present, lawful organs of power are being restored in the highland districts. Electric power supply has been resumed there. All the communication services, shops and bakeries are functioning normally. Schools and kindergartens have been reopened in this area after lengthy holidays and the military confrontation," Nazriyev stated.

Government Troops Said To Take Control in Garm

LD0903130493 Moscow Radio Moscow World Service in English 1200 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] Government troops in Tajikistan have taken control over the Garm region, where the remaining armed formations of the scattered opposition have been taking refuge in almost impassable mountains. According to the republic's defense minister, Aleksandr Shishlyannikov, local elections are under way in the region; food supply to the population is being organized. Yet isolated gangs of the Islamic fundamentalists, whose ranks are joined by Afghan mojaheds from neighboring Afghanistan, are continuing their attacks on soldiers and representatives of the authorities.

Uzbekistan

President Discusses Issues With Western Journalists

PM0903084093 Paris LE MONDE in French 7-8 Mar 93 p 4

["J.K." report: "Uzbekistan: Islam Karimov's Dream"]

[Text] Tashkent—A Central Asia placed under Russia's protective wing but in which Uzbekistan would play a leading role: This is the avowed dream and ambition of Islam Karimov.

Uzbekistan, which he rules with a very firm hand, has a rather bad reputation. It is spoken of mainly for the decisive role which it played in the victory of the neo-Communists in the bloody civil war in neighboring Tajikistan and for the series of political trials of oppositionists, in the best "Soviet" tradition. It was clearly in an attempt to change this image that the former first secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party engaged in a grand public relations operation on Thursday 4 March when he had a long meeting in Tashkent—which he calmly describes as "the capital of Central Asia"—with a group of Western correspondents, warmly welcomed in a country usually more inclined to refuse visas or expel undesirable journalists.

He seemed to be an affable and smiling man, ready to talk without any time limit and to accept all questions. But he also seemed to be a man who grew angry when subjects which irritate him were raised, who sees no other path for his country than the one which he has outlined, and who shows his bitterness and jealousies: for instance when he mentioned two of his Central Asian counterparts who have a much better reputation in the West than he does—Kazakh President Nazarbayev and Kyrgyz President Akayev, "the world's greatest democrats of whom you are so fond" and who, unlike him, have not undergone the trial of an election with multiple candidates.

Islam Karimov is a man with a conviction, if not an obsession: He wants to prevent at all costs his country suffering the same fate as Tajikistan or even Azerbaijan where the opposition has taken power from the former Communists and for which he predicts the worst misfortunes. He "feels the pressure being exerted on Uzbekistan, which is now in the forefront," mentioned "the terrorists, saboteurs, and gangsters who are preparing themselves in Iran and Afghanistan." He described Afghanistan, torn by civil war, as a "fuse" which is being deliberately kept alight to threaten Central Asia in general and Uzbekistan in particular. And he does not understand why the West is not showing him greater solidarity in his struggle against "Islamic fundamentalism," "instead of worrying about two or three oppositionists who are crying for help."

In his view it is clear that Uzbekistan cannot avert the danger alone: It was Islam Karimov who, during a CIS summit in Tashkent in May 1992, was behind the creation of a "collective security pact" to which the Central Asian countries, Russia, and Armenia adhered. It was also most probably he who convinced Russia not to pull out of Tajikistan, as it was tempted to do and he who, according to numerous reports, procured decisive aid for that country's neo-Communist forces which have gradually gained the upper hand over the coalition of democrats and Islamic groups. He only half admitted it: Questioned on the subject, he said that "no Uzbek citizen took part in the fighting on Tajik soil."

Questioned on the bombardment of the last refuges of the Tajik armed opposition in the high Garm valley by planes described as Uzbek, however, he replied in terms which were scarcely ambiguous: "If any air forces participated in the liquidation of gangsters in Tajikistan, the question must be put to Shaposhnikov" (commander-in-chief of the CIS armed forces). In this connection, he reaffirmed that at the last CIS summit in Minsk, Russia and three of Tajikistan's neighbors decided to send forces to that country to respond to the new government's request for help.

At the same Minsk summit, the Uzbek president revealed in passing, he tried to win his colleagues' support for the formation by CIS members of a "pact" modeled on the former Warsaw Pact. "All the republics would have their own army, under the wing of the powerful Russian army." Mr. Karimov was not reluctant to show his colors: "I would like Russia to guarantee security in Central Asia." He explained that "this is consistent with history" and added that "Russia's interests must coincide with those of Central Asian countries, and especially with those of Uzbekistan." In saying this, Mr. Karimov went further than the wishes openly expressed by his neighbors, with the possible exception of Mr. Nazarbayev: Like the Kazakh president, he sees the future in a new "confederation " of former Soviet states. But his way of explaining that Uzbekistan, with its 22 million inhabitants (including 15 million Uzbeks proper, in addition to 7 million Uzbeks scattered, according to him, throughout the region, including

Afghanistan) and its glorious past, has a natural vocation to play a "leadership role," is not likely to be to his partners' taste.

At the same time, his apparent readiness to accept a kind of Russian protectorate does not mean full approval of the policy pursued by Russia, particularly in the domestic sphere which naturally has repercussions on Uzbekistan. Of course, this man who initially supported the putsch expresses his support for Boris Yeltsin and the Russian "democrats." But his irritation clearly breaks through when he remarked that "Mr. Yeltsin waited until the past few days to explain in an interview to PRAVDA that the Communists must be respected." Similarly, he spoke of the "failure of the reforms in Russia," and expressed the hope that the Russian president will draw his inspiration from the Civic Union program to "prevent chaos." He said that there is no question of Uzbekistan returning to the past, or questioning private property, but immediately explained that his country must "move toward the market at its own pace;" otherwise a "social explosion" is likely: Oppositionists, however, state that the reform is at a standstill and that some small enterprises have even been "deprivatized."

These main oppositionists—the few who still dare to express a view—also accuse Mr. Karimov of using and misusing the Tajik bugaboo to establish an increasingly authoritarian government. His argument, however, follows an entirely different logic. Asked why his country differs from the other former Soviet states, including Central Asia, in its propensity to hold political trials, he began, in the purest Soviet style, to highlight the law and a "highly democratic" Constitution, "as Jacques Attali, chairman of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, recently admitted." After that he accused the opposition of being financed from abroad, "of trying to establish parallel structures and of struggling for power by illegal means." In the same breath, he said that the coming elections, scheduled for fall 1994, will be pluralist, and praised the two parties which are in practice allowed to exist—his own and the party of "Progress of the Homeland" which was also created with his blessing. But when asked, as an aside, why he thinks it necessary, after banning the Birlik movement, to prosecute poet Mohammed Salih, leader of Erk, the only real opposition party, and seven other oppositionists on the basis of the terrible Article 62 of the former Soviet penal code, which applies, among other things, to "betrayal of the homeland" and makes provision for penalties ranging from 10 years' imprisonment to the death penalty, he suddenly abandoned official jargon and asked candidly: "Find me a different article, you have to use the penal code you have...." Moreover, he pointed out, the most recent trials (especially the trial of a Birlik leader kidnapped in Kyrgystan by the Uzbek secret services) have resulted in sentences accompanied by amnesties. Moreover, "it is not yet certain that this trial will be held," he explained, before adding: "Furthermore, if you ask with so much persistence, it will not be held...." This was naturally intended as a joke, but it was also a way of admitting that, like the Soviet leaders of the past, he takes account, in his way, of Western opinion.

Furthermore, Islam Karimov, who was clearly in a mood for confidences, added, "I have met Mohammed Salih six times, we even drank a bottle of cognac together. I offered to include some of his men in the structures." The problem is that the Erk party leader, who was his opponent in the presidential election, refused, and Mr. Karimov does not seem able to accept that. An opposition which refuses to rally round must be destroyed. This is clearly another deeply held conviction of a man who does not seem to understand that his creed is not shared: "When a democratic state based on a market economy is founded, a strong executive is needed." Very strong, apparently.

Oil Reserves Seen as 'Promising'

LD0903191493 Tashkent UZBEKISTAN APN in Russian 1100 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Summary] Tashkent, 9 March— About a year ago, a source of oil was discovered in Mingbulak in Uzbekistan's Namangan oblast. Preparations for the installation of another three boreholes are now nearly complete. The experience of last year, when a fountain of oil flooded the surrounding area, has been borne in mind. Pipelines have already been laid to a station at which railroad tank cars will be filled. Experts in charge of the drilling work believe it will soon be possible to talk of Uzbekistan as "oil-bearing," since its oil reserves are seen as promising.

Armenia

Discussions Over Constituent Assembly Reported

NC0903190993 Yerevan Radio Yerevan International Service in Armenian 1630 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] The Armenian Supreme Soviet held an extraordinary session yesterday at the demand of 91 deputies to debate the drafts concerning the convocation of a constituent assembly.

Following a prolonged debate, there were not enough votes to include the issue on the agenda. The reason the vote failed was because, although most of the deputies do not reject the idea of a constituent assembly, they are not convinced that adopting a constitution by other means, such as by parliament or through a referendum, would not be in the country's interests. Another concern was that the people, currently experiencing a grave social situation, are not psychologically ready for any elections. Therefore, the formation of a new legislative organization would be extremely uncertain.

The deputies were unanimous on the issue of expediting the adoption of the nation's constitution. This gives rise to hope that Armenia will enter 1994 with a new constitution.

Recent Fighting for Mardakertskiy Rayon Updated

NC0903190793 Yerevan Radio Yerevan in Azeri 1430 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Excerpts] Dear listeners: We now present a report on recent incidents in the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic [NKR] and on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border.

The confrontation is gradually deteriorating in Nagorno-Karabakh. After repelling Azerbaijan's attacks, the defense forces of Artsakh [Nagorno-Karabakh] have broadened their struggle to remove Azerbaijan's occupationist units from their homeland. Armenian freedom fighters have liberated several towns in the past two days. Azerbaijani National Army units lost many men in the Mardakertskiy battlefront, including 50 men in a single clash in the past three days. More than 1,000 Azerbaijani troops have been wounded. Several of Azerbaijan's officers and men have surrendered to the Armenians. Ten Azerbaijani officers surrendered to Armenian freedom fighters in Askeranskiy Rayon nearly 10 days ago.

Azerbaijani units have hastily abandoned their positions in the Mardakertskiy battlefronts after realizing they would not be able to resist the Artsakh fighters. The NKR self-defense forces liberated Metsshen, Kusapat, (Gulapat), Mokhratag, and Damirli in Mardakertskiy Rayon on 7 March. As previously reported, Azerbaijan has suffered many casualties. The Armenian side also suffered casualties. However, compared with the number of men Azerbaijan has lost, the Armenian casualties are few. That indicates that the NKR fighters are more experienced and familiar with the terrain of their homeland. [passage omitted]

Recent reports indicate that the Armenian self-defense forces have maintained their attacks and are currently only 5 km away from the rayon center in Mardakertskiy Rayon. Regardless of the fact that Azerbaijan's units have used military aircraft and helicopters in that part of the battlefront, [words indistinct]. The enemy side has lost many men and a lot of military equipment. Armenian fighters have destroyed three infantry combat vehicles.

Positional fighting is taking place in the other parts of the battlefront. Reports from the NKR indicate that Gadrut has been hit with artillery fire from positions in Azerbaijan's Fizulinskiy Rayon. One person was killed and another was wounded in the attack, which also caused damage.

The peaceful situation near the humanitarian corridor in Lachinskiy Rayon has been disrupted, with Azerbaijani military units firing on NKR's self-defense positions. The Armenian side returned the fire in an effort to silence the enemy positions. No one was hurt among the Armenian freedom fighters. The Goris-Lachin-Stepanakert highway is open to traffic.

The situation in a large section of the border is relatively peaceful, as has been the case in the past few days. However, the situation is tense in Gorisskiy Rayon, particularly in areas bordering Azerbaijan. Khndzoresk was hit from Azerbaijani positions at 1200 on 7 March. The town was the target of seven missiles. Khndzoresk was also hit in the afternoon. Azerbaijani positions simultaneously fired on Tsur and Kornidzor on the night of 7 March.

The day a new round of talks will be held at international level for a cease-fire in Nagorno-Karabakh is drawing closer. An effort is being made to have the talks resumed now. The fire needs to be stopped. Talks must be held to solve the problems and differences of views. Azerbaijan must, therefore, relinquish its policy of using force and recognize the NKR people's rights.

Georgia Increases Volume of Gas to Republic

OW0903183793 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1455 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The volume of gas delivered to Armenia is being increased. The republican government's press service reported to Interfax that on March 8 about 2.5 Mn [million] cubic meters of gas were delivered to Armenia though the gas main which goes through Georgian territory. (The republic needs a minimum of 7.5 Mn cubic meters a day.) The gas main laid in the Marneulskiy region of Georgia has been blown up four times over the last month and a half. Repairs after the last explosion were completed on March 4.

Armenia's republican emergency headquarters decided to extend power supplies to apartments in Yerevan due to the increase of gas. Now electricity is delivered 3-4

hours a day instead of 1.5-2 hours. In addition to this, now about 80 enterprises out of 400 are operating in the capital.

Due to the lack of fuel, the city's public transportation system is not working properly and Yerevan's metro is overcrowded. The metro department reported to Interfax that trains which transported 100,000-120,000 passenger a day 2-3 months ago, now carries over 250,000 a day.

The department noted that an agreement was reached to procure new metro cars in Moscow because the 16 existing trains obviously cannot satisfy the present requirements.

France Sends Food Aid Through Turkey

NC0903162293 Yerevan SNARK in English 1339 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] Yerevan, March 9 (SNARK)—SNARK'S reporter has been informed by the Armenian Government of the fact that about 300 tons of the humanitarian aid, in particular, food, was sent by the French Government to Armenia through the territory of Turkey. Red Cross of France and the Armenian community of France joined their aid to the governmental one. This is the first attempt to deliver goods to Armenia through the territory of Turkey. There exists inter- governmental arrangement on supplying Armenia to get the humanitarian aid with the transit possibility.

Japan Presents Aid in Form of Oil, Money, Medicine

NC0903214293 Yerevan Radio Yerevan International Service in Armenian 1630 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] Armenian Prime Minister Grant Bagratyan yesterday received Japanese Ambassador to Russia Sumio Edamura, who is visiting our republic to hand in his credentials on the occasion of his appointment as Japan's ambassador to Armenia.

Armenian-Japanese economic ties and the market relations being introduced in Armenia formed the theme of the talks. In mentioning the $1-million donation to Armenia by his government, the ambassador said acceding to Armenia's wish, Japan will send oil to Armenia instead of money. In addition to that, $2 million will be allocated to purchase medicines and medical equipment.

Edamura specifically stressed Japan's readiness to help Armenia reopen the Armenian nuclear power station.

Matters pertaining to the Armenian diaspora were also discussed during the meeting. The sides emphasized the importance of that large section of Armenian people in the forging of international ties and strengthening the Armenian economy.

Armenian Foreign Minister Vahan Papazyan received the Japanese ambassador on the same day. Ambassador Edamura informed him that Japan has allocated $2 million for extraordinary humanitarian assistance to Armenia. In his opinion, some of this money could be used to obtain fuel transporters. Japan would like to use the rest of the money for aid programs being provided through the International Red Cross. The ambassador also said he brought with him 1 ton of humanitarian assistance composed of medicine and baby food. He added that the aid has already been handed over to the Armenian Health Ministry.

Matters of mutual concern were also discussed during the talks. Both sides' interest in the speedy establishment of peace in the region was stressed. Particular significance was attached to the possibility of developing Armenian-Japanese trade, economic, cultural and scientific ties, as well as to the prospects of cooperation at international forums on matters of mutual interest.

Ambassador Edamura handed his credentials to Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan today.

Azerbaijan

Lezghins Demonstrate Against Conscription Into Army

Kamberov Blames Russia for Interfering

NC0903181793 Baku AZERTAC in English 1444 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] Baku, March 9, (AZERTAC)—Today at a national assembly meeting Isa Kamberov, chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan, announced that the meeting took place at Kusary (the main town of the same name area), mainly populated by Lezghins, was a thorough planned action aimed to aggravate the international situation at the area next to Dagestan.

The speaker of the parliament said "the meeting was arranged to attract attention to the Lezghin question and to discuss it at the people deputy congress of Russia on March 10." "The fact that meeting would be held and would be ended, according to the plan worked out by extremists of Dagestan, in violent clashes with the police and victims became known three days before," the speaker of the parliament said. According to Mr. Kamberov, security institutions of the republic were told about the fact and they prevented undesirable consequences, despite very rough and stirring up national hatred anti-Azerbaijanian speeches of emissaries from Dagestan.

Baku: Rumors of Uprising Exaggerated

OW0903161393 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1600 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Report by Andrey Pershin, Andrey Petrovskiy, and Vladimir Shishlin; edited by Boris Grishchenko; from the "Presidential Bulletin" feature—following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The Azerbaijani president's press service has denied reports by Russian media about the death of six Lezghins while Azerbaijani police dispersed a meeting in the predominantly Lezghin Gusar region. According to the press service, the demonstrators gathered to discuss conscription into the Azerbaijani army. The meeting was quiet and there were no reasons for the police to interfere.

IF [INTERFAX] Note: The self-defense headquarters of the Lezghin movement Sadval believes that the decision to hold such a meeting was taken after the Azerbaijani authorities announced their plans to draft 1500 Lezghins and send them to Karabakh. Representatives of the Sadval movement allege that the meeting was attended by about 70,000 people and that six Lezghins were killed during clashes with the Azerbaijani police. They also described the events as the Lezghins' uprising against the Azerbaijani authorities.

The Azerbaijani Interior Ministry also denied Sadval's reports about the casualties. It confirmed that on Saturday and Sunday [6 and 7 March], demonstrators in the Gusar region protested against the drafting of Lezghins to the Azerbaijani army. The meetings were not anti-Azerbaijani, although armed individuals, who had penetrated into the Gusar region from neighboring Dagestan, tried to turn them into an anti-Azerbaijani demonstration. Azerbaijani law-enforcement bodies did not take any counter measures, fearing lest the militants might provoke armed clashes.

On Saturday, Azerbaijani Interior Minister Iskender Khamidov stated that "after Baku resolutely rejected the Russian military quarters' ultimatum, Russian imperial circles increased pressure on Azerbaijan, in a bid to make it join CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] military-political bodies by creating new hotbeds of instability in Azerbaijan and in the Caucasus as a whole." Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Tofik Gasymov described the reports about the Lezghins' uprising as a faked sensation. He told Interfax that the events in the Gusar region had been provoked by external pro-imperial and anti-Azerbaijani forces. "The main goal of these efforts is to undermine the democratic drive in Azerbaijan," he said.

Abulfaz Elchibey's press service demanded that the Russian media's faked reports about Azerbaijan be officially denied. It also stated that Russia's law-enforcement bodies and ministry for information and the press violated the law by spreading misinformation.

Protest Called 'Generally Peaceful'

NC0903211493 Baku Radio Baku Network in Azeri 1700 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] The fabricated report aired by Russia's "Vesti" program in connection with a meeting [preceding word in English] held by nearly 1,000 people in Gusar Rayon has greatly upset the local population. Regardless of the provocative activities and efforts to create a confrontation by individuals from Dagestan, the meeting, which was organized to protest the call-up of Lezghins and the work of the local executive authority, was generally peaceful. No clashes occurred.

Representatives of the rayon's people organized a rally and adopted a resolution condemning the calumny made by the "Vesti" program on 6 March [date as heard]. The allegations made by the destructive forces from Dagestan during the meeting have been regarded as an effort to strain ethnic relations and interfere in Azerbaijan's internal affairs. It was decided that the leaders of the Dagestan Autonomous Republic Supreme Soviet and the officials of Akhty, (Muharremkend), Kasumkend, and Derbent Rayons, which have common borders with Gusar Rayon, be informed of the unease felt by residents. Furthermore, the republic's leaders were urged to take resolute measures to obstruct activities aimed at straining ethnic relations in the rayon and strengthen control on the social and political situation. Meanwhile, the Gusar Rayon Executive Authority has disclosed that life has returned to normal in the rayon. The people are concerned with their daily problems.

State of Emergency in 2 Rayons Extended 1 Month

NC[illegible]03210493 Baku Radio Baku Network in Azeri [illegible] GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] President Elchibey has decreed that the state of emergency in Agdamskiy and Kazakhskiy Rayons will be extended for another month. The decree will be submitted to the National Assembly to be approved.

Defense Ministry Planning 30-Percent Cut in Personnel

NC0903212393 Baku Radio Baku Network in Azeri 1700 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] Work has begun to reconstruct the republic's Defense Ministry in accordance with Azerbaijan's national defense concept. Structural changes and reforms are currently being put into effect within the Defense Ministry's framework. In compliance with President Elchibey's instructions that the ministry's staff be partially reduced, measures are being taken to reduce personnel by 30 percent without harming the country's defense capability.

State Committee Adopts National Defense Concepts

OW0903123993 Baku Azerbaycan Radio Televiziyasi Television Network in Russian 1500 GMT 5 Mar 93

[From the "Telefaks" newscast]

[Text] The president's press service informed KHABAR-SERVICE agency that the meeting of the State Committee for Defense was held, and at it foundations of national defense concepts were adopted. These envision that Azerbaijan intends to pursue a peaceful policy toward all neighboring countries, as well as to struggle for peace and security in the region.

At the same time, Azerbaijan needs a strong army to guard its territorial security and national interests. It is being created exclusively for defense and will not interfere in politics. The creation of such an army is a constituent part of the process of creating an independent state and will be founded on the UN Charter, the concluding statement of the CSCE, the Helsinki Declaration of 1992, and other international legal standards.

Supreme Soviet Chairman on Trade Problems With Russia

OW0903085193 Baku Azerbaycan Radio Televiziyasi Television Network in Russian 1500 GMT 4 Mar 93

[From the "Telefaks" newscast]

[Text] Isa Kamberov, chairman of Azerbaijan's Supreme Soviet, told a correspondent of the KHABAR-SERVICE agency that if talks on trade and economic cooperation with Russia after the introduction of the 65 percent tax were fruitless, Azerbaijan would search for alternative solutions to guarantee its supply of essential goods. He believes that a republic which has chosen the road of independence should be prepared to withstand the economic difficulties it may encounter due to the complexity of economic relations with Russia.

Japanese Businessmen, New Envoy Meet Economic Official

OW0903085593 Baku Azerbaycan Radio Televiziyasi Television Network in Russian 1500 GMT 8 Mar 93

[From the "Telefaks" newscast]

[Text] A delegation of representatives of Japanese business circles accompanied the Japanese ambassador in Moscow, Sumio Edamura, during his visit to Azerbaijan to deliver his credentials to the president of the republic. The delegation visited the republic's Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, where the Japanese businessmen and financiers met with Rauf Karayev, the minister of foreign economic relations.

The KHABAR-SERVICE agency learned from the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations that the main goal of the visit is to collect exhaustive information on Azerbaijani economic potential for further investment in branches of the republic's economy which are of interest to Japan. According to (Kaliyev), chief of the economic administration of the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, the guests were especially interested in the production of iron and aluminum ore, machine building, the republic's export potential, and also agriculture. According to the guests, they received full and honest information about the economic situation in the republic today.

According to information supplied by the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, the current economic relations with Japan are one-sided and irregular.

Georgia

State Council Debates Idea of Treaty With Russia

LD0903230593 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 2100 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] Speaking in the Georgian State Council, Eduard Shevardnadze has described the signing of a treaty with Russia as vitally important for Georgia. However, the most radical parliamentarians, ITAR-TASS reports, have rejected the very idea of establishing any relations with Russia and insisted on the immediate withdrawal of its military units from the territory of the republic and their replacement by a NATO military contingent. Others, supporting the head of state, pointed out that Georgia cannot build a democratic society in conditions of confrontation with Russia.

Shevardnadze Urges Settlement

OW1003120693 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1109 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Georgia's leader Eduard Shevardnadze says "Georgia will be in for a catastrophe unless it settles its relations with Russia." Speaking in the Georgian parliament on Tuesday [9 March], when the deputies were addressing the Georgian-Russian relations, Eduard Shevardnadze characterized the situation in the republic as "a complete economic crisis and famine." No humanitarian aid will save us, he said, professing that if the situation in the republic remains unchanged, 300 to 400,000 people will lose their jobs this year. Next year, the Georgian leader argued, "will be even more dramatic when all the enterprises come to a standstill."

Eduard Shevardnadze pointed to the need to restore "old traditional" ties with Russia, since no new relations have taken shape yet, "in order that famine could be warded off, people would not lose their jobs and the republic would preserve its raw material sources." Meantime, the Georgian leader said he was hopeful that the republic, with its uniquely advantageous geographical situation, will make "major profit" from arranging transit through

its territory. "If Russia falls out of this system, we will only obtain 30% of our potential income," Shevardnadze emphasized.

According to the report of INTERFAX correspondent, parliamentary discussions have clearly projected two bents: radicals demanded that the Georgian-Russian agreement should be placed in dependence on a pullout of the Russian troops from the territory of Abkhazia. More moderate parliamentarians, however, demanded that realities of the day, too, be taken into consideration, while some of the deputies opined that Georgia has suffered serious losses by joining the CIS.

Georgian parliamentarians will continue deliberations on the Georgian-Russian relations on Wednesday afternoon.

Shevardnadze Appeals Directly to Yeltsin for Rubles

LD1003165193 Tbilisi CONTACT INFORMATION AGENCY in Russian 1345 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Text] Yesterday, 9 March, Eduard Shevardnadze, chairman of parliament and head of state of the Republic of Georgia, sent an official message to Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin.

The message states that in accordance with the multilateral agreement signed in Bishkek on 9 October 1992—on a single monetary system and coordinated monetary, credit, and currency policy of the states which have kept the ruble as a legal means of payment, and also in accordance with the bilateral agreement between Russia and Georgia of 7 January 1993—Russia has taken on an obligation to provide for Georgia's cash needs.

In spite of this, Georgia has not received any monetary back-up for the fourth month now. A disastrous situation has arisen in the republic with regard to wage payments, pensions, benefits, and grants.

We ask for your help in allocating Georgia 60 billion rubles in cash, which Georgia has not received from December 1992 to March 1993.

Armed Forces Report Successful Counteroffensives

AU1003100093 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 0800 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Text] Here is a recording that we received this morning on the telephone from Sukhumi. We spoke with Batoni [Georgian polite form of address] Soso Margishvili, head of the press center of the Georgian Armed Forces Main Staff.

[Begin Margishvili recording] Yesterday, 9 March, at approximately 0700, the enemy began combat actions in the direction of Shroma and Kamani. They brought up several units of heavy equipment to their combat positions in the vicinity of Amzara and opened fire on our positions. Our return fire forced them to stop firing and to withdraw their heavy equipment from the front line.

Yesterday, throughout the day, the enemy became active in different directions. At around midday, they began mortar fire from Kvemo Eshera. At the same time, they transferred heavy equipment in the vicinity of Zemo Esheri, although their actions did not lead to any developments.

Yesterday there was also a telephone conversation with the representative of a combat force [dajgupeba] in Gudauta who stated that one more of the Georgians—Otar Ioseliani—taken hostage from the ship Gagra had been released, while Dr. Yuriy Kvaliashvili, who has been in captivity since 28 January, has now been placed under house arrest. In addition, the Abkhaz side stated that they had taken more than 200 Georgians from Kvemo Eshera, Gudauta, and Gagra to Sochi and Adler at their own request. Yesterday also, a group of 12 male residents of Kvemo Eshera were flown from Adler to Sukhumi. According to them, the remaining refugees in Adler are without any kind of resources.

Yesterday morning in Ochamchira Rayon, the enemy launched an attack using large forces and several units of heavy equipment on our positions near the village of Labra. As a result of the offensive, our military units were initially forced to retreat. However, following the arrival of reinforcements, a strong counterattack was launched, and the enemy forces were driven from the positions they had occupied. The number of dead and wounded among the enemy in the battle amounted to several dozen. At the same time, one enemy tank and one infantry fighting vehicle [word indistinct] were destroyed while one tank and one infantry fighting vehicle were captured in one piece by our soldiers. In addition to the 24th brigade stationed in Ochamchira under the command of Colonel Gia Vashikidze, soldiers from Sukhumi's 23rd brigade also participated in this battle.

Regarding last night, it passed off fairly quietly both in the Ochamchira rayon and at the Gumista River and there were no combat actions.

This morning, the enemy opened fire at the Gumista River, but their firing points were immediately suppressed. [end recording]

Navy Attempting To Land

LD0903153793 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1355 GMT 9 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Vadim Byrkin]

[Text] Moscow, 9 Mar—The Georgian Navy is making attempts to approach the shore in the Gagra-(Tsandripsh) area to reconnoitre and land an assault party, as a result of which the Abkhazian armed forces are improving the coastal defense system. This was reported today in an operational report from the Abkhazia Defense Ministry.

The ITAR-TASS correspondent has learned from the Russian Defense Ministry press center that over the last 24 hours, the army seismic laboratory in Eshera, guarded by Russian paratroop units, was not subjected to artillery bombardment. No attacks on Russian servicemen in Georgia have been recorded over the past few days. This is possibly linked to the start of the fourth round of Russian-Georgian talks in Moscow, at which military matters are among the top issues being examined.

Parliament Tasks Russia With Solving Ossetian Crisis

LD0903220593 Tbilisi CONTACT INFORMATION AGENCY in Russian 1700 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] The State Council of the Republic of Georgia today began discussing a resolution adopted on 6 March by the Supreme Soviet of the autonomous republic of North Ossetia "on recognition of the Republic of South Ossetia." After the debate parliament resolved to adopt a statement addressed to the Supreme Soviet and the president of the Russian Federation in connection with this fact, while the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs is to send a corresponding note to the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The draft statement which was submitted for debate stresses that Russia must deal with all problems arising in connection with the conflict in Shida Karli [South Ossetia] on the basis of the accepted norms of international law, as was set out in the document signed by Georgia and Russia on 24 June, 1994 in Dagomys.

Parliament then continued a debate begun at the previous sitting on the current state of relations between Georgia and Russia. Also today parliament is to discuss a report by Roman Gotsiridze, Georgia's vice premier and chief of staff for economic reform, about the time frame for signing an economic treaty with Russia.

Parliament Discusses North Ossetian Recognition Decision

MK1003123693 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 10 Mar 93 p 3

[Guga Lolishvili report: "Parliament's 'Dual Reaction'"]

[Excerpt] On the morning of 9 March the Georgian parliament began its meeting by discussing the North Ossetian Supreme Soviet's decision to recognize the South Ossetian Republic. The parliament adopted a decision in this connection with a dual reaction: The Georgian Foreign Ministry should present a protest note to the Russian Foreign Ministry and the Georgian parliament should make a special statement on the subject, its text to be drawn up by the evening.

To all appearances, what prompted the North Ossetian Supreme Soviet to make such a decision was the sharp deterioration in Russian-Georgian relations.

The question of Russian-Georgian relations was touched on by Vice Premier Roman Gotsiridze. In his view, regarding economic relations with Russia, Georgia should opt for the so called "zero option" whereby Georgia will relinquish its share in the economic assets of the former USSR and, along parallel lines, be exempt from repaying the debts of the former USSR. It is well known that the Baltic states have chosen a similar path. As for a common monetary area, it is essential to begin a staged withdrawal from the ruble zone, the vice premier said. Gotsiridze added that coupons already printed for Georgia were stored in a foreign country to become an experimental model of its future money (until a national currency is introduced).

Estonia

Russian Embassy Spokesman on Meri-Trofimov Meeting

WS1003073193 Tallinn BNS in English 1408 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Excerpt] Tallinn, Mar 09, BNS—The press spokesman of the Russian embassy in Tallinn, Andrey Yakushev, today expressed bewilderment over reports published in the press about Monday's [8 March] meeting between Estonian President Lennart Meri and Russian Ambassador Aleksandr Trofimov.

Yakushev told BNS that although he doesn't want to engage in "public polemics," he considers it necessary to mention that the Russian ambassador at the meeting expressed concern, according to the guidelines he had received, about certain tendencies which have recently emerged in Estonia's policies in regard to Russia.

The Russian ambassador also gave his own assessment of how the "Russian topic" was handled at the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia. [passage omitted]

Government To Privatize State-Owned Property

WS1003090093 Tallinn ETA NEWS RELEASE in English 1945 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] Tallinn, 9 March 1993—Estonia plans to privatize state-owned property, including land, housing and successful enterprises, worth about 11 billion kroons ($846,154 million), the country's Minister of Reform, Liia Hanni, told a government briefing on Tuesday [9 March].

The government plans to distribute money received from the sales as following: 50 percent will be transferred to a compensation fund designed to pay compensations for property confiscated by the Soviets, 15 percent will be transferred to the Bank of Estonia's statues fund, 15 percent to non-budgetary labour fund and 15 percent to pension fund, Hanni said.

Official Says Priority Given to Defense Forces

OW0903185893 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1645 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Rein Helme, the chairman of the republican State assembly's commission on defense, declared at a press conference on Tuesday [9 March] that Estonia's defensive policy gives priority to the Defense Forces.

He pointed out that the commission headed by him and the largest parliamentary faction Isamaa represented by him do not support the concept of the former governments which stipulated that detachments of frontier service were the core of the armed forces. "There was a criminal delay in the creation of the Defense Ministry and main headquarters due to the adherence to this doctrine," Helme said.

Currently the frontier service ceased to enjoy a privileged position, the deputy said. The major attention and material funds have been allocated to the Defense Forces. This is a cause of certain annoyance of the frontier guards and tension between them and representatives of the defensive structures, but we have taken these process under control, Helme said.

Helme also declared that the Frontier Guard Department should stay within the Interior Ministry. Besides, the service in the frontier guard should be a professional one and it is necessary to refuse from active duty. The frontier guards should be subordinate to the main command of the defensive forces during a crisis situation, Helme pointed out.

Velliste Meets Visiting Norwegian, Discusses Aid

LD0903134893 Tallinn Radio Tallinn Network in Estonian 1500 GMT 8 Mar 93

[Text] Foreign Minister Trivimi Velliste received (Helga Hernes), state secretary of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, today. According to the Foreign Ministry's press service, the aim of (Hernes') visit to Tallinn is to study Estonian priorities so as to draw up Norwegian aid programs. Trivimi Velliste and (Helga Hernes) discussed Norwegian assistance to the Estonian border guards and the police, cooperation in forestry and fishing, and facilitating computer networks and archives.

According to Velliste, the three agreements concluded between Estonia and Norway create good preconditions for cooperation. In their discussion they also dwelled on Estonian membership in the Council of Europe.

Latvia

Amendments to Saeima Election Law Approved

LD0903195493 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 1800 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Text] The Supreme Council today discussed as a matter of urgency, and adopted on their first reading, the amendments proposed by Deputy Ivars Silars to the law on the fifth Saeima elections. They relate to the stipulation in the law that any citizen of Latvia can be adopted as a candidate, if he has signed, as stipulated by the Central Electoral Commission, a statement that he has not been, and is not now, an official of the USSR or Latvian SSR State Security Committee, the USSR Ministry of Defense, the security services, army intelligence service, or antiespionage staff of Russia as legal heir to the USSR and of other countries, or the holder of a residence of one of these agencies or a [word indistinct] apartment. This announcement must be appended to the list of candidates.

Deputy Ivars Silars included more categorical norms in his recommendations, providing that Latvian citizens who are engaged in the above institutions cannot be accepted at all as candidates for Saeima deputies. Particular satisfaction with this announcement was expressed by Deputy Juris Bojars. He proposed discussing at the plenary session on 17 March a draft resolution stipulating that the Central Electoral Commission has the right to disclose the contents of documents in KGB archives. The deputies accepted this proposal.

Communists To Send Delegates to 29th CPSU Congress

OW1003141093 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1214 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] According to a report from the press center of the organizing committee of the Central Committee of the "revived Communist Party of the Soviet Union," on March 6th "under semi-legal conditions, the second stage of the Founding Conference of the Union of communists of Latvia" took place in Latvia, at which seven delegates were chosen to go to the 29th CPSU Congress.

The Congress is scheduled to start March 26.

Lithuania

Second Session of Parliament Begins 10 Mar

OW0903190093 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1645 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The second spring session of the Lithuanian Seimas begins on Wednesday, March 10.

Seimas Deputy Chairman Aloyzas Sakalas told Baltfax that on the first day of their work the Seimas deputies will discuss the president's nomination of Adolfas Slezevicius to the post of the republic's head of government.

The Lithuanian parliament is expected to continue the formation of the republic's Constitutional Court, discuss the candidates to the posts of eight out of nine Court's members, and adopt the law incepting a supervisory office over the activities of the government officials.

In addition, the Seimas will accept the resignation of chairman of the republic's Main Elections Commission Vaclovas Litvinas, as well as of chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bank of Lithuania Vilius Baldisis.

Mr Sakalas also emphasized that the session ought to address without delay the amendments to the laws which have to do with the economic reforms in the republic.

Slezevicius Confirmed as Prime Minister

LD1003112693 Vilnius Radio Vilnius Network in Lithuanian 1058 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Text] Voting started at the Lithuanian Seimas on the candidature of Adolfas Slezevicius for the post of the Lithuanian prime minister. There are 106 members of the Seimas members present at the plenary session; 70 members voted in favor, 13 members voted against, and 23 members abstained. Therefore, Adolfas Slezevicius has been confirmed by the Lithuanian Seimas in the post of the prime minister of the Republic of Lithuania.

Slezevicius Profiled

OW1003160993 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1513 GMT 10 Mar 93

[Report by Andrey Pershin, Andrey Petrovskiy, and Vladimir Shishlin; edited by Boris Grishchenko; from the "Presidential Bulletin" feature—following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas on Wednesday [10 March] signed a decree naming Adolfas Slezevicius, a 45-year-old economist, to be the new prime minister of Lithuania.

IF [INTERFAX] Note: Slezevicius was born on 2 February 1948. Upon completing school, he worked in the television factory in Siauliai and went to night school in the mechanics department of Kaunas Polytechnic University in the same city. From 1971 to 1977, Slezevicius worked at the Kaunas dairy factory as a senior engineer-builder, head mechanic, and head engineer. From 1977 to 1981, he was deputy minister of the Lithuanian meat and dairy industry. From 1981 to 1983, he took a correspondence course at the All-Union Institute of Economics and Finance and was a student at the Academy of National Economics of the Council of Ministers of the USSR. From 1983 to 1989, Slezevicius was deputy head of the agro-industrial complex in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania, and a year later became chairman of the Pienocentras industrial conglomerate of the republic's ministry of dairy industry. After the restoration of independence in Lithuania in 1990, Slezevicius became deputy minister of agriculture in the government of Kazimiera Prunskiene. A year later, in 1991, he was relieved of his post by way of a resolution of the then-prime minister Gediminas Vagnorius. Since 1991, Slezevicius has been president of the Lithuanian-Norwegian joint venture C.-Olsen Baltic.

Slezevicius is the author of two scientific monographs and fifty articles on agricultural economics. In 1992, he did graduate work at the University of Iowa in the United States. In the same year, he became president of the Lithuanian Association of Dairy Producers. Before his accession to the post of prime minister, Slezevicius was a member of the presidium of the Democratic Labor Party of Lithuania. His wife Biruta works in the home.

They have two daughters, 21 and 9 years old. Slezevicius's favorite hobby is basketball, which corresponds nicely with his height of 198 centimeters.

Economy Minister on Past, Present Economic Problems

PM0903142293 Stockholm SVENSKA DAGBLADET in Swedish 6 Mar 93 p 6

[Report on interview with Lithuanian Economy Minister Julius Veselka by Bobo Scheutz in Vilnius; date not given]

[Text] Perhaps you have heard the Soviet joke which takes as its point of departure Lenin's famous quotation to the effect that "communism equals Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country."

According to the rules of mathematics, this leads to the conclusions that Soviet power equals communism minus electrification and that electrification equals communism minus Soviet power.

Over a cafe table in Vilnius we laughed over the old joke which, according to my good-humored informant, has acquired new topicality in today's Lithuania.

"In Lenin's day electrification was the key to economic progress and its equivalent today is the setting-up of a working market. And it fits precisely," he said. "The people who have to get this market moving are the old communists who nowadays have subtracted everything Soviet from what they do."

The question is whether this is enough, whether this has sufficiently increased the capacity to tackle the particularly difficult economic situation in which Lithuania finds itself. During the presidential election campaign there were many visions of how the crisis problems should be tackled. But that was then. Life has returned to normal and promises must be based on reality. That is something that is usually more difficult.

A man who knows this full well is Lithuanian Economy Minister Julius Veselka. He is one of the four ministers from the former communist party, the Democratic Labor Party, and fits in well with the joke, if you want. But when we met at this ministry it was not lightheartedness which set its seal on the conversation. He has the less than enviable task of trying to get a grip on the country's economic development and this rarely gives cause for laughter.

"No," he said, "our situation at present is really difficult. It is like after the war and most of it depends of course on the break with the old economic system.

"Our problems are due in part to the fact that under the Landsbergis regime the economy here in Lithuania was politicized, and in part to the economic pressure from Russia. But we have to learn to accept that we are and will continue to be economically dependent on Russia. And we have to accept that Russia looks after its interests just as the United States tries to protect its political and economic interests in different parts of the world. This is what the world looks like and we as a small country must learn to balance between these different interests and understand how we can draw benefit from them," he added.

This is why he thinks that Lithuania must now develop and stabilize its economic relations with Russia, on whose energy Lithuania is entirely dependent, at the same time as establishing close ties with the EC and with the Nordic countries.

"Our ultimate goal is to become full members of the EC, but we know that there is a long road to that goal and that we can only come to the West via the East. That is why we are now entirely directeed toward economic cooperation with Russia," Julius Veselka said.

Lithuania was the first former Soviet republic which introduced import and export restrictions, set up customs controls, and introduced a strict licensing system as a way of prizing itself loose from the old Soviet economy.

"But that was stupid," Julius Veselka claimed. "As a result our companies were forced to buy raw materials and products elsewhere, despite the fact that they could have bought them much more cheaply in Russia. They were prevented by our own import restrictions and customs duties and this forced up both prices and inflation. We have had to pay a high price for Vytautas Landsbergis' politicization of our economic relations with Russia."

He also talked about the disappointments which the market economy, which was to replace the old economic system at a stroke, has meant for the vast majority. Things are difficult for people in Lithuania today; one third cannot support themselves and the rest can only do so with great difficulty—with the exception of the small minority who have mined gold from the opportunities of exploiting without moral scruple the great need for more or less everything.

"We have very liberal conditions for jointly owned companies, but unfortunately we have been been able to note that it is not the serious foreign companies with the experience and capital which come here. The majority make no contribution to our economy—rather the reverse—and in some cases we have actually initiated police investigations," a disappointed minister said. (None of the companies is Swedish.) This, in combination with the general criminal trend, has unfortunately meant that the general public, companies, and the authorities now view interested foreigners with suspicion. Unfortunately this suspicion also affects the serious ones.

Julius Veselka admitted that people probably were a little naive to begin with.

"Initially we all probably believed that if only we became free we would suddenly be able to live as in the West. But now we understand that you first have to realize that the

market and democracy are primarily about responsibility and initiative. As economy minster I can state that our businessmen and entrepreneurs come to the ministry all too lightly wanting cheap credits. But we all have to realize that money cannot solve our problems. We have to change our attitudes and our approach to work in order to be able to survive and develop a market economy," Minister Veselka said.

But money is needed of course. The International Monetary Fund has provided credits on terms which some people think are too tough, and there is talk that Lithuania should renegotiate some of them. The margins are not great. According to Julius Veselka, between $1 billion and $1.5 billion are needed per year in credits over the next few years in order to succeed in stabilizing the economy.

But stabilization depends on a number of other factors, not least that economic developments in Russia and the other former Soviet republics are brought under control. Lithuania must also succeed in implementing the very strict economic policy that is necessary, and the question is how great is the willingness to make sacrifices among the already hard-pressed population.

"Officially we have only 200,000 unemployed for example, but in reality there are around 0.5 million people who still are in paid work, but who in reality have no work to do. This hidden unemployment is perhaps a good thing socially, but extremely devastating from the economic viewpoint.

"This is a fault in the system which we have to tackle, but what happens if we do?" Economy Minister Julius Veselka asked rhetorically and sighed.

Budget Confirmed in Line With IMF Requirements

OW0903185693 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1840 GMT 9 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Lithuanian Deputy Finance Minister Reinaldijus Sarkinas said Lithuania's budget for 1993 was in line with the requirements of the International Monetary Fund [IMF].

Addressing a news conference in Vilnius on Monday [8 March], he said the revenue part of the budget was set at 173 Bn [billion] coupons, its expenditure part, at 178 Bn coupons. The deficit, he said, accounted for a mere one percent of the gross national product. Lithuania managed to implement last year' budget without any deficit, Sarkinas said, although a deficit of 3.7 Bn coupons had been planned.

In January 1993, the Deputy Minister said, the state received a revenue of 11.3 Bn coupons, or 6.3 percent of the annual budget. The revenue of January 1992 accounted for only 2.6 percent of the year's budget.

Sarkinas said the government had promised to the IMF to introduce a new national currency within the first six months of this year.

Landsbergis: Signing of CIS Oil Agreement Illegal

WS1003073093 Vilnius ELTA NEWS BULLETIN in English 1343 GMT 9 Mar 93

["The Law Was Not Broken"—ELTA NEWS BULLETIN headline; from ELTA "NEWS BULLETIN" No. 201]

[Text] 9 March 1993—Passions are not calming down in respect to Lithuania's Industry and Trade Minister Albertas Sinevicius, who participated at a meeting of representatives from the CIS and other former soviet republics in Surgut, Russia last week. The representatives from the Commonwealth of Independent States signed a document on the founding of a council for oil and gas.

The Seimas opposition leader Vytautas Landsbergis accused Sinevicius of violating a paragraph of the Lithuanian Constitution on the non-joining into post-soviet political and economic blocks, when he signed the document. Sinevicius assertions that he signed only one document in Surgut—the bill for the hotel, did not stop the opposition's inert attacks.

The government information bureau distributed an announcement, in which it states that Sinevicius did not break any laws. The Prime Minister Bronislovas Lubys signed an decree, entitling Sinevicius the power of attorney "to negotiate on the creation of a council on questions of the State's oil and gas." The government information bureau reminds that in the accepted law of the Supreme Council, the "power of attorney to negotiate and sign international agreements for the Republic of Lithuania, is granted by the Lithuanian Government, signed by the Prime Minister and counter-signed by Foreign Affairs Minister of the Republic of Lithuania."